





**Abianeh:**

**Revitalization of a Historical Settlement**

**A Case Study**

Thesis Submitted for the Degree of

**Doctor of Philosophy**

**In**

**Architecture**

**By**

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## **Declaration**

This thesis is my original work and has been composed by myself.

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## **Abstract**

Historical settlements such as Abianeh offer many clues as to our existence and the roots from which we have been so long dependent. Understanding the workings of such settlements helps resolve a great deal of lost social, economical, cultural and indigenous skills. However, recording the values of these places has become an almost impossible task for anyone to perform. Due to their inaccessibility and lack of central government interest, control and funds, the infrastructure of such a settlement is much too gradually diminished. Encouragement of a transient society through social and financial pressures, results in migration to larger cities for the inhabitants of these settlements. This has brought with it irrevocable damage, both to the settlements in terms of "lack of youth", and the larger cities "over population", phenomena that are not unique to Abianeh and Iran but felt by the world at large.

This thesis is a practical response to such a problem, which has gradually become an international 'disease'. The work looks at the settlement as an entity in its own right and examines it very objectively so as to derive real-life solutions, which can be practically applied in a revitalisation programme. These can enable it to revert or stabilize its sustainability in terms of its indigenous population, traditions, restoration, rehabilitation, renovation and its future expansion all within the framework of their cultural and social context. It is hoped that lessons can be learned from this study, which can be applied universally.

To isolate the underlying factors behind the essential character and identity of the settlement;

To establish and preserve for posterity the results of a survey that accurately records the physical entity;

To formulate a conservation policy, which acknowledges these factors and materials, that can offer Abianeh a real prospect for survival and regeneration, and which can act as a template for future conservation exercises targeted at historical settlements at risk throughout Iran.

The research objectives considered detail aspects of the study and can be summarised as comprising the following:

- a. To establish and successfully apply a methodology that enables the systematic collection and collation of universal, general and specific information related to the historical, geographical, social, environmental and cultural factors that have shaped the essential character of the people and settlement of Abianeh;
- b. To establish and successfully apply a methodology that is tailored to recording the extant physical condition of the settlement;
- c. To establish and successfully apply a methodology based on the above results that will clearly identify the absolute factors that must be addressed, before a successful conservation policy can be contemplated.

## Preliminary Observations

The driving factor for the researcher was the need to understand the way a settlement could be realised in terms of its various functions, in regard to its inner values and relevance to the revitalisation of its people and the basic infrastructure. This could be set against a context of witnessing different organisations “throwing money” at projects such as Abianeh while not really getting to the core of the problems. In parallel, various incomplete studies have been carried out by the National Heritage Agency of Iran and other similar organisations through the involvement of local and international Architects on various other settlements<sup>1</sup>. The work commences by looking at the settlement in its macrocosm, its historical development and its demise and its relationship to various movements in history. This was undertaken mainly by referring to the existing historical references and literature available on the subject. Together with various analyses of the adjoining settlements and cities, which gave rise and order to the whole area and its relevance to the country at large, its association with social, geographical and cultural changes has also been examined.

The work developed further through a more geographical regional, contextual and environmental study. This was achieved by careful analyses of archives and works related to the topography and geography of Iran, in particular the National Heritage archives on these subjects.

The entire settlement needed to be mapped for the first time; this was undertaken by the aid of aerial photography and its digitization and conversion into a workable map

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<sup>1</sup> The researcher has worked as consultant for the National Heritage Agency, the British Embassy in Iran and GLC, Wandsworth Borough Council, at various times on conservation projects.

at various scales by the use of extensive ground work and surveys. This was then used to plot various organic developments followed by analyses of the entire settlement in all its aspects, forms and functions. This ranged from its single cell to the more complex building types, a process which also helped in a unique mapping of the various zones within the settlement and its development through history.

A more detailed analysis was then carried out by measuring the three dimensionality of spaces, developing a further layer to assist in the understanding of the built fabric and analysis of the most prominent dwellings and their propriety and suitability. By connecting with the inhabitants, the social hierarchy and order through the settlement, this work helped to underpin the very ethos of the settlement.

A further deeper analysis was undertaken by identifying the elders of the settlement, and locating them in various parts of the country. This was carried out by a team of skilled people under the Writer's direction to locate, find and organize meetings in the city of Kashan where these consultations could comfortably take place, at easy reach of Abianeh. A question list was composed by the researcher based on the key issues which had to be recorded from the archive of these inhabitants' collective memory.

A parallel study was carried out in the areas of gerontology, anthropology, arts and crafts, languages, trade, local and countrywide events, together with all aspect of their social, political, religious convictions and beliefs, inclusive of their linguistic differences. Collectively all layers relevant in the making of Abianeh, or what was, had been and has become culminated into a set of recommendations based on zoning areas, maps and regulations. These are expected to assist in bringing about the changes necessary for an effective revitalisation programme. This work is the only

living record of Abianeh, in its entirety, in existence

The principal aim of this research has been to identify the forces behind the values and the making of a settlement known as Abianeh along with its inherent qualities. It is essential to identify and map its existence to try to record as much of its existence and principles governing that existence as much as possible, to record, preserve and give guidelines as to the rationale behind what has been, what and how it is and what can be done to improve the situation.

### **Structure of Thesis:**

The document has been laid out in several chapters:

Introduction to Abianeh, Revitalization Programme, Climate and Technology, Historical Background and Influences, Study of the People and their Customs, Architectural and natural Phenomena, the Design of the Revitalization Programme, and concludes in Chapter 7, with Proposals for a Revitalization Programme.

The concluding part is concerned with presenting the case as it really is, with direct intervention as the practical step in which the overall forces causing the settlements ongoing demise can be overcome by revitalisation, strengthened by practical means. Using the findings of the research and by identifying what was hidden and unclear in order to establish a norm is the means by which the revitalisation programme can be pursued.

## **Dedication**

I dedicate this research to the people of Abianeh and gratefully acknowledge their interest and help in assisting the author over many years when compiling this very private intrusive record involving their daily lives.

To the Head of National Heritage Agency **Mr. Kazerooni** for recognizing the need for such a work and the legal actions required to be taken to implement some of its recommendations, I also dedicate this work.

Finally, my wife Rebecca and family deserve special mention for their endurance and support.

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## Preface

I started my interest in restoration and rehabilitation and refurbishment of historic dwelling long before I ever know of Abianeh. I began my working career at the Greater London Council, Central Technical Unit at Wandsworth Borough Council, London, over twenty years ago, working in such locations as Pepys Estate in the east, "The Colonnade", to the southside of the river Thames, and such areas as Brixton, Lambeth, Victoria Station Road, and on the west side, in the Putney and Fulham areas. Work concerned listed buildings and communal spaces and included Covent Garden and the London Dockland development areas.

In Iran I began working in the same field, initially restoring historical buildings of the British Embassy compound of Iran-Tehran. This lead to major projects such as the restoration of the parliament building of Iran, restoration of part of the main palaces of Niavaran and Sadabad, constructing the Consulate of the Islamic Republic of Iran in Dubai in a traditional Safavid style and various other projects for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Iran.

The writer's interest in revitalization of historic cities began with the growing realization of the need to record the past and to "save the future" from forgetting the heritage that is so easily left behind. At that, other subjects of interest were the problems of capital cities of the world in connection with over-population and "control of the masses" especially their statistical effects on development areas and the methods of measuring such effects by scientific methods. The problems of expansion, random development, and lack of interest in continuity and urban identity were noted. In working for Tehran Municipality, the Writer realized that



his lack of information and limited knowledge in this area inhibited his involvement in similar projects for the greater Tehran area. It was then that he realized the need to explore the revitalization of certain values and possibilities, which were being ignored and overshadowed by modernity, certain socio-economical needs in our existing communities, and the influx of people from the rural communities which to some extent had destroyed the surrounding villages and paralyzed the larger cities, thanks to their inadequate infrastructure and inability to cope.

The Writer identified some projects in such places as Tehran city which proved to be impossible to take on due to a lack of resources and the scale of the work involved. Abianeh was selected through consultation with Tehran University and Westminster University. I later transferred to Edinburgh College of Art due to the expertise available in understanding the generic background to such studies.

During this time the head of the National Heritage Agency of Iran and other Scholars in Tehran became aware of my work and decided that it would be beneficial to commission me to make my research an ongoing project as well, which could likely be implemented. The Researcher spent a period of four years in order to complete seven volume submissions to the National Heritage Agency in Iran. This was the beginning in understanding of the revitalization of historical cities in Iran, in this sense. This work led the way into being considered for a legislative law and its recommendations were implemented in terms of the protective conservation belt for the outer and the inner region of Abianeh. The work is being studied further and completed in many aspects by the National Heritage Agency and various universities in Iran.

Abianeh has recently also been noticed by UNESCO and is being considered for registration as an international heritage site.

Almost forgotten and nearly abandoned, Abianeh has rejected the rich aspects of Persian culture and civilization, which at first glance were not apparent. Through this study, some inner truth about the settlement has appeared, which has enlightened the author to the approach in understanding, recording and preserving some of the values which would have been otherwise lost to us for ever. His hope is to see this exercise repeated for the other settlements in Iran and, perhaps, other similar cases in other countries, which will help in giving identity and resource to areas which are potentially more viable in terms areas of habitation while richer in culture than the larger cities.

It was noted by the researcher and the organisations such as the National Heritage Agency of Iran<sup>2</sup> that a need to develop one's understanding of settlements such as Abianeh is limited and needs to be better interpreted. The phenomenon of their demise has been much too real and has directly contributed to the reduction in the local population, leading to a gradual destruction of the total infrastructure of the settlement and its different and interesting cultural identities. There is a need to arrive at a balance between what the people want in order to remain in their settlement, what the government is able to provide, and what the inhabitants can do for themselves. The fact is that one cannot revitalize by force, or by throwing finance at a problem so deeply bound to the forces within a particular culture and a moment in history.

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<sup>2</sup> For years the National heritage has been engaged in trying to purchase or challenge the indigenous people of Abianeh to take interest in the correct restoration and revitalisation of their natural habitat. But due to lack of understanding on both parts this has not been possible.

## **Introduction**

### **A. The Research Inception:**

This research is aimed at developing an understanding of how to approach the complex issues of revitalizing a historical settlement for the benefit of the indigenous people. This can be achieved by looking in detail at people's lives and their habitat in order to derive solutions from their own social, economic and environmental factors, as perceived by them for themselves. It is contingent on searching for significant clues as to the local and central government policies, together with the movement of people and the external pressures on the village as a whole. To seek harmonious redevelopment and the involvement of people without disrupting the core inner structure of life and yet integrating harmoniously, a new possibility in order to expand the sustainability of the inhabitants and the viability and incentives of remaining in their homesteads is a clear goal.

This work is based on an issue which is at the forefront of concern internationally, that is, the demise of such settlements. By looking at what the settlement was historically, how it developed and where it is at now, the Researcher looks at the problems and examines them objectively by physically measuring and calculating, actively analyzing and deriving clues as to a diagnosis with reference to the geographic, historical, architectural, Gerontological, statistical and social issues. An extensive involvement and participation of the indigenous people from all age groups, gathered from all over the country, were central to the author's research and conclusions.

At first glance one can completely miss the whole point about the settlement,

being aware of the social and the physical presence of the place only. Not until one takes the route outlined here and views such settlements in a multi-dimensional, dissected state of being, "dead yet alive," through the meaning and significance the inhabitants have ascribed does one realize the significance of such places with the greater picture of life and the history of our own development. For the ordinary Abianeh person, life outside is not particularly important and the fast moving technologically governed society of the new world has not impacted on these people as a whole, although they are and have been throughout their history closely connected with the changing world outside, and have managed to adapt themselves to it at various times in their history. However, the traditional values, which still linger quite strongly, are what they aspire to still; through their culture and history, and thus the meaning they give, personalize and makes their values unique to the place. It is these meanings, which then set up a chain of value systems, which governs such settlements. It is as if an invisible link binds everything harmoniously and naturally together by using a genetic code, sealed by their relationship and confirmed by the success of continuity and contentment of the people.

It is a fact that, indeed, no two settlements are the same and this exercise must be carried out individually for every settlement in order to recognize its inner relationships and inherent problems within. These are followed by the solutions and the reasons derived from the settlement through its people as concluding factors of importance for future reference and for decisions related. Therefore although one can derive universal laws from such studies, one is still bound to the unique quality of such places and their Archetypal pattern. This is what the researcher has set out to realise as unique and is the key to every revitalisation programme. Revitalization of

## Historic Settlements

One must bear in mind that it is not a recent recognition that the most historic settlements around the world (especially in countries like Iran, which have always enjoyed a cultural richness and diversity in its variety of settlements, their individual customs, life-styles, arts and crafts making the country as famous as any other of its exports such as oil), have come to face serious problems with their existence.

Factors contributing to these pressures are recognized through several observations:

- 1) A dwindling population of mainly elderly residents.
- 2) A lack of continuity in the indigenous skills.
- 3) A physically deteriorating urban fabric; and the construction of inappropriate new buildings with “alien” technology.
- 4) A lack of funds and local and central government support and interest.
- 5) A shifting perspective on the of prospect of jobs, by relying more and more on centralized government resources rather than through the integration of work and education through-out the country. This has resulted in the abandonment of the old ways and the settlements.

To revitalize a settlement such as Abianeh, one must pay careful attention not to damage what is left of the heritage and not to alienate people by enforcing modern “better” ways of doing everyday functions, which have otherwise taken many hundreds of years to develop and imbue. It is the inner-self, the essence of the settlement, which one must capture, in every dimension yet is not necessarily visible.

This must work within a frame work which is acceptable and within the means of the people themselves. It should not be dependent on others doing their work for them or providing massive loans for budgets they cannot afford or maintain. Revitalization of historic settlements is all about giving life back to a people and a place which have been put through a test of time and all its historical changes. To do this one must look to the inhabitants themselves for any answers. It is not necessarily a technological problem, but may well be one that technology has unintentionally helped to exacerbate.

### **Why Abianeh as the case study?**

It is this inner-self, an oneness with nature and harmony and the fact that the original inhabitants still occupy the settlements, which emphasize the uniqueness of Abianeh. In turn this compels one to know more about the settlement, the reasons for its survival against the odds, the people and the underlying principles that govern their lives. This offer clues to what should be done to preserve the settlement, and prevent it from further demise.

Every year for the past eight years the researcher has observed the demise of this settlement and its attractions. Abianeh provided a unique opportunity to capture something which was still there in its absolute original condition, an intact entity defined by Nature and its inhabitants. In effect the researcher had to become one with them, and had to map the entire story about the place and its people for himself, in order to be able to identify with the inhabitants. Thus a programme was devised to carry out extensive fieldwork providing the Writer with a complete profile of the

settlement, the people their culture, their needs, and their day to day problems.

## **Objectives of the Research**

The Researcher's primary objective has been to revitalise the settlement as a whole. These was initiated by getting close to the people and by gaining their confidence, as the natives of Abianeh are very proud people and do not necessarily wish to discuss their particular needs or difficulties with outsiders. This was followed by setting out a detailed program whereby a series of parameters are evaluated and a set of rules and standards or types of governing rules are attained. Then a program was set up aimed at understanding the history, the place, the people, the problems and inaccessibility in order to reach out and understand their inner-self and to come up with solutions for the preservation of the people's way of life and the built environment. Collectively these can result in realizing the objective of revitalizing the historical settlement for the people and the government by preserving it for many generations to come and helping it to sustain itself for an indefinite period. Thus a living record of research, especially drawings, for future use and the integration of the new with the old, whilst incorporating the indigenous skills and people themselves, would be the final objective.



## Research Methodology

As a consequence of the questions asked, the desired outcomes of this research methodology gradually emerged:

- a. A permanent visual record of the urban environment concerning the streets and related spaces, through the media of aerial photography and measured drawings, water-colours, photographs and video films should be taken. This was absolutely necessary due to the accelerating demise of the buildings and their scope for redevelopment.
- b. A detail record of the most prominent and historically valuable buildings should be established. This was undertaken to reinstate the damaged ones of similar styles and construction, and in order to visualize what the place was like in its prime.
- c. A full typological analysis of every building type and their generic origins should be documented. This was achieved by looking at the settlement very objectively, by analyzing it as series of originally developed wells and through its growth in time.
- d. A survey based on measured drawings and photography could facilitate an analysis of iconographic symbolism, to help record the essential character of the buildings.
- e. Aerial photography and its digitization could be used to obtain a base map at various scales. This was used as the basis for all Plano metric studies and for editing and identifying various sections of the settlement and to zone and identify districts, housing, roads, underpasses and all the relevant plane metric syntax of the



settlement, including growth through time, hierarchy, propriety and order.

f. Live interviews with local people and governmental officials should be undertaken to establish very relevant events and disputes and matters of importance to the inhabitants, and the authorities. This also helped in building up a historical and social record of the people and their way of life throughout their living memories.

g. Research in to existing studies on this settlement should be undertaken both home and abroad. Inclusive of all the archives at the National Heritage Agency of Iran in Tehran, Kashan, Natanz and Esfahan. This helped in gathering every known work in existence on the settlement, and helped identify the missing parts.

h. Statistical analyses of the people and their gerontology, and changes through their lives, by looking into their births and deaths, and movement of people and sustainability of life and work in the area should be undertaken through live interviews and consulting governmental archives and national statistical analyses in the area.

i. A "total inner area" complete survey needed to be carried out, door to door. A system was devised to check every household and develop an understanding of detail statistical analyses of the most common criteria governing the underlying concern of the inhabitants in establishing usage and a general overall response to what was happening. This took shape as a standard form which was completed by every inhabitant resident at the time. This exercise was most useful and helped in understanding the problems associated with limited occupancy and distant living, together with individual ideas, expectations, and problems.

j. To ensure that all functions, objectives and tasks set out were to be

carried out on time and within budget, a project management system needed to be established under Primavera (CPM) software and run as professionally as possible.

The work involves over ten key residents of Abianeh, three interviewers, eight ground surveyors, who each helped in reproducing and speeding up the drawings and statistical analyses.

The researcher also had to be based in Tehran and Kashan for most of the research. Arrangements had to be made to be resident in Abianeh and Kashan and have access to the settlement in all seasons. The National Heritage Agency gave the researcher a room above the fire temple and a local family catered for the team during the term of the research.

Based on this information and its relevance and importance to the local people, an underlying structure was developed, some of which has today been accepted by the statutory authorities and is being implemented. The study has not only become a practical application of revitalizing the settlement, but it has also become used on many other layers not previously realized. This includes helping realize a settlement such as Abianeh for any scholarly interest in a historical settlement and its people and the depth through which culture and societal behaviour and traditional values can be maintained and kept alive by the indigenous people themselves.

## **Theses Organization**

**Chapter One:** This section was added as a result of a lecture given at the Edinburgh College of Art, which deals with the total concept and approach to the thesis and identifies the relevant points in its general form while assisting the reader in understanding the overall work and its implications.

**Chapter Two:** This looks at the settlement's location and identifies its macrocosm, by looking at its morphological, plano-metric, access and contextual relationship with other neighbouring towns and cities, in addition to the natural environment and the influence of the environment on the people and their habitats.

**Chapter Three:** This examines at the historical context and effects of historical events and stylistic imports on the settlement by reflecting to the most prominent features.

**Chapter Four:** This deals with the specific quality of life, customs and religions, with special attention given to their special ceremonies and unique social behaviour.

**Chapter Five:** This section looks at the architectural and the natural phenomena of the settlement with specific attention as to its unique typology and the essential details of all principal aspects of the built environment.

**Chapter Six:** This is concerned with the revitalization analyses, arguments and objective statistical analyses and conclusions resulting in the final recommendations, drawings and suggested regulations.

**Chapter Seven:** The accumulative information and proposals and issuance of the

structured proposals in a practical way aiming to ease implementation and the future interactions between the indigenous people and the authorities.

## Chapter One:

# **The Revitalization Program**

## Chapter One: The Revitalization Programme

### Introduction

Following a lecture concerning the revitalization of Abianeh which was given by the writer at the Edinburgh College of Art, it was considered appropriate to introduce this subject matter as comprising much of chapter one.

Consequently the purpose of this chapter is to examine in general the revitalisation of historic settlements in Iran, then consider Abianeh as the essential case study.

### Revitalization Programme

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| 1.2 What are the symptoms? -----  | 3          |
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## 1.1. What is a Revitalization Program?

According to the Oxford Dictionary, 'Revitalise' means giving back life and utility.

'Revitalisation' is the noun.\*

Revitalisation, in the context of this dissertation is concerned with reviving and bringing back activity while supplying help to preserve a way of life for a people and their natural surroundings, with the least disturbance to infrastructure and sensitivities.

Any devised programme should be both subjective, in that it has to be felt and understood by our senses, and objective, in that any valid answers require to be scientifically measured against real facts. These in turn should be generated from

the macrocosm and microcosm of the place with due regard to its people, history and social behaviour.

There are no given rules as to any standard methods of undertaking such a programme, but one can refer to certain rules and evolutionary facts and draw conclusions. Study can lead to an understanding from which teaching based on a sensible and logical assessment of facts may provide potential solutions. Consequently these can be applied back to the settlement for the people by the people.

### **1.2. What are the symptoms?**

These can be understood as –

- 1 When a living settlement becomes endangered by extinction.
- 2 When the natural forces forming the fundamental basis of a society or a settlement becomes undermined.

### **1.3. Why study Abianeh?**

#### **a. The Location:**

Abianeh was considered ideal due to its location: enclosed by mountains and remote from any large city.

#### **b. The People and Their Unique Lifestyle:**

The indigenous people still live within the settlement while maintaining a traditional life style, very different to the rest of the region.



**c. The Project Size and Scale of Operation:**

The size of the settlement and complexity of work were considered reasonable enough to enable the researcher to undertake and complete various surveys, leading to the creation of a series of as-built or record drawings in the context of a new ordinance survey map.

**d. The Urgency of Need:**

The settlement was to the forefront of the central government's National Heritage programme and was a major concern due to its marked deterioration. Indeed UNESCO had taken an interest\* and the pressure was in place to commence some kind of revitalisation programme.

**e. The Inherent Architectural Values:**

The settlement has its unique features, with a well developed yet concealed structure to all aspects of building and life-style.

**f. Lack of Knowledge About Abianeh:**

It was also apparent that there was no readily available information as to the settlement's style or the appropriate refurbishment or preservation programme required. In this context, there were no substantial studies ever carried out on the settlement, although a few fragmented studies have survived which unfortunately did not address the serious issue of identifying the settlement in its total context.

### 1.4. Where is Abianeh!

Abianeh (Abianeh) is a village in Barzerood a rural district located near the city of Natanz in the province of Esfahan. The village is at a longitude of 51.36, and at latitude of 33.35. It is 2,220 meters above sea level.

Abianeh is situated northwest of Mt. Karkas in the central mountain range to the west of Iran. The settlement 'sits firmly' between Mt. Dominan to the southwest, Mt. Kalâjâr to the northwest and Mt. Himand, which is located to the northeast. The village occupies an area within a valley forty kilometres to the northwest of Natanz and twenty kilometres to the west of the Natanz-Kashan road. Barzrood River flows alongside the south of the village, and is apparently less active than in previous decades.\*

Abianeh is surrounded nearly on all sides by tall mountains, so much so that it appears to be a natural 'dead end', totally enclosed and shielded by them. Until recently the only connection to the rest of the world was a rough pathway, which has now been superseded by asphalt roads linking the settlement directly to Kashan and Natanz.

To reach Abianeh the visitor must take the road to Hanjen which forks from the Kashan-Natanz main road. Hanjen is fifty-five kilometres from Kashan, while the distance between Hanjen and Abianeh is twenty-five kilometres. Much of this distance comprised a valley located at the foot of local mountains, tenuously linked to an old main road connecting Qom, Kashan, Yazd, and Kerman. Along the route to Abianeh several other settlements are encountered: - Hanjen, Komjan, Barzerood, Yarand, and Tare. Each of these villages has special features, but being situated in a valley they have common features with regard to their location and topography.

They have all one thing in common and that involves coming to terms with their natural environment and an adaptation to its morphological and climatic forces.

### 1.5. Lack of Information

Most of the information in this dissertation has been generated from the settlement in terms of its people, objects, doors, finishes, and so on. Historical periods have been determined by studying the decoration and iconographic symbolism while referring to similar events and work in the adjoining towns and cities

#### Initial survey of the existing plans available

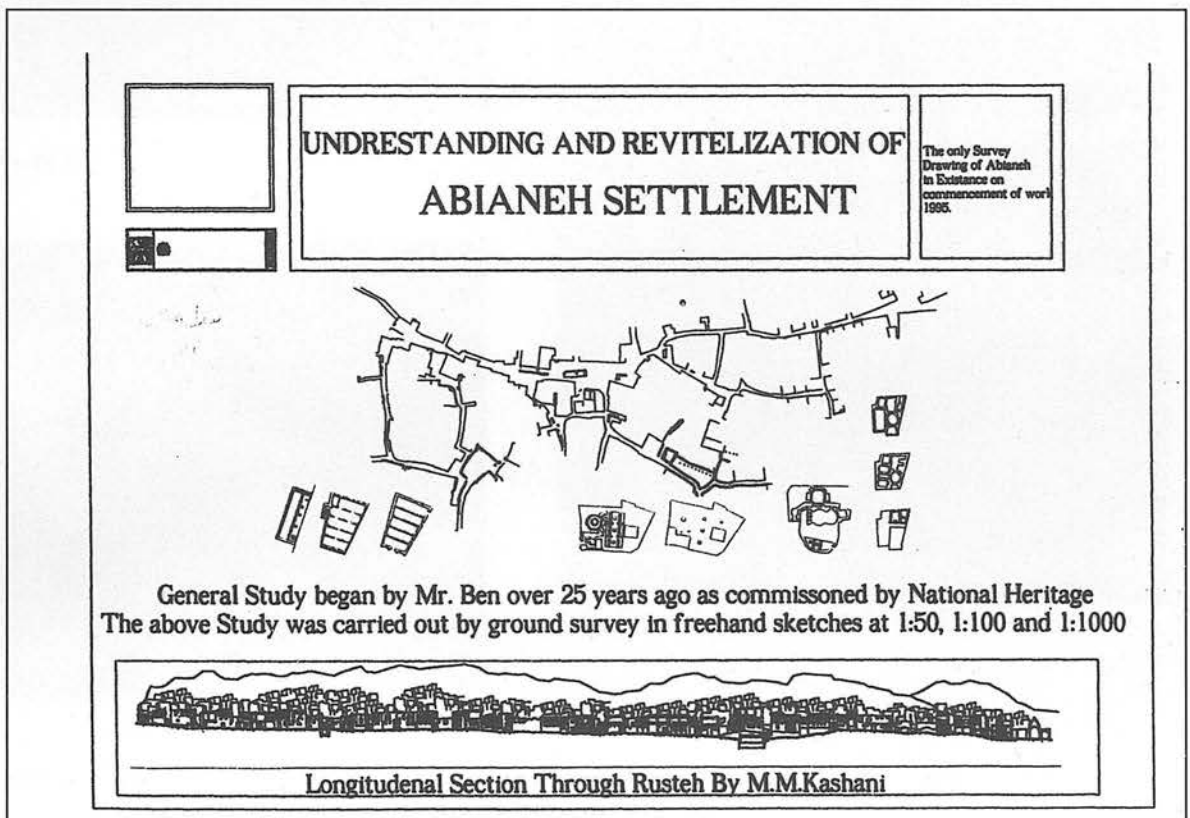


Figure 1: Reconstruction of a single plate showing the previous entire recorded visual history of Abianeh (by the Author)

This survey was initially made by hand drawing in some twenty-five meters of

length, stored at the national heritage building in Isfahan. The researcher gathered all drawings found in fragments and reconstructed the over all plan of the surveyor Mr. Ben, employed some 25 years ago to survey the settlement.

### 1.6. Dating the Buildings



Figure 2



Figure 4



Figure 3

Information on the identity of the owners, dates and relevant renovation or Iconographic or calligraphy details gave clues as to the exact date of construction of the dwellings as inscribed on their main entrance doors and built fabric.



### 1.7. Method of Research

A permanent visual record of the urban environment of the streets and related spaces, through the media of aerial photography and measured drawings, watercolours, photographs and video films were taken. This was considered absolutely necessary due to the prevailing rapid demise of the buildings and recent redevelopment in and around the settlement.

A detailed record of the most prominent buildings of importance and historical value was undertaken. This was pursued with the objective of reinstating the damaged buildings of similar style and construction, to visualize what the settlement was like in its optimum past, and to help devise an appropriate conservation strategy.

The survey results led to an extensive typological analysis of every building type and their generic origins. This in turn facilitated an examination of the overall settlement by objectively analysing it as a series of organically developed cells with an associated growth pattern through time.

Measurement and photography, with analysis of iconographic symbolism, enabled the recording of the essential character of the buildings.

Aerial photography led to digitisation to obtain a base map at various scales. The base map is the key for all plano-metric studies, for editing and identifying various sections of the settlement and for zoning and identifying districts, housing, roads, underpasses and all the relevant Plano-metric syntax of the settlement, including growth through time and hierarchy, propriety and order.

Live interviews with local people and governmental officials established

relevant events, including disputes and other matters of importance to the inhabitants, and the authorities. This also helped in building up an historical and social record of the people and their way of life throughout (their) living memory.

Research included a survey of existing studies on this settlement both in Iran and abroad. The archival collections at the National Heritage centres of Iran in Tehran, Kashan, Natanz and Isfahan, proved invaluable in identifying much of the known work in existence on the settlement, and helped the writer in his understanding of the gaps in information.

Statistical analysis of the people and their gerontology, changes throughout their lives, looking into their births and deaths, the movement of people, and sustainability of life and work in the area, were established through live interviews and by consulting governmental archives and national statistical analyses in the area.

A 100% complete survey was undertaken door-to-door. A system was devised to check every household and to develop an understanding through a detail statistical analysis of the most common criteria, in order to establish usage and the general overall response to what was happening. A standard form was completed by every inhabitant who was resident at the time. This exercise proved most useful and helped in understanding the problems associated with limited occupancy and distant living, together with individual ideas, expectations and problems.

To ensure that all functions, objectives and tasks identified were to be carried out on time and within the specified budget, a project management system was established under Primavera (CPM) soft ware and administered as professionally as possible.

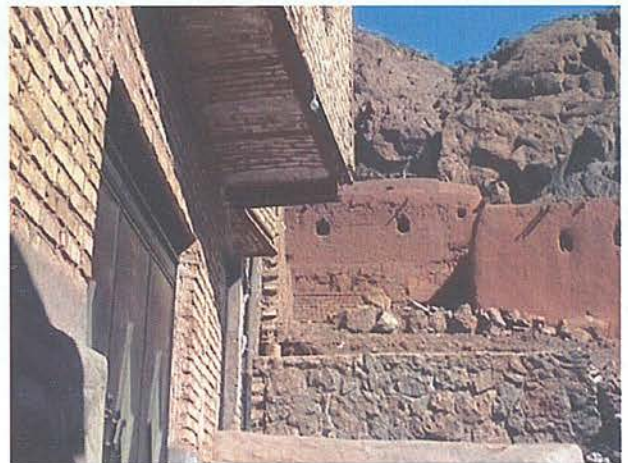
The work embraced the recruitment of ten key residents of Abianeh, three interviewers, and eight ground surveyors, the latter who helped in recording physical and dimensional criteria leading to the efficient preparation of drawings and statistical analyses.

During the essential gathering of primary material phase, the researcher was based in Tehran and Kashan. Consequently arrangements were made to be resident in Abianeh and Kashan, thereby having access to the settlement in all seasons. Indeed, the National Heritage agency provided a room above the fire temple and a local family catered for the writer throughout the term of the research.

### **1.8. Changes in Taxonomy, dilemma of the old and new forms of construction, destruction of urban continuity, and the alienation of form to content.**

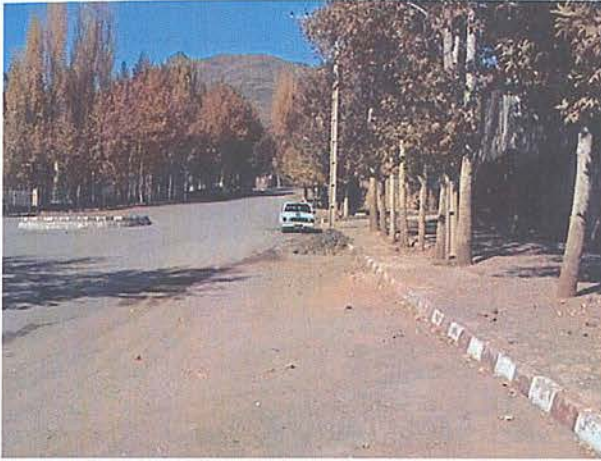


**Figure 5: Old and New Dwellings**



**Figure 6: Use of New Materials**





**Figure 7: A typical town element**



**Figure 8: New spans and fenestration**

Figures 5, 6, 7 and 8 demonstrate the conflict of interest between the old and new

Constructional methods and the overall scale and character of the buildings.<sup>1</sup>

Figure 7, demonstrates the adoption and compliance with universal road construction techniques. Consequently pavement design echoes the ideas of a boulevard which

Iran inherited from the French in the twentieth century, now adopted throughout the country.



**Figure 9: Confusion in use of New Materials**



**Figure 10: New Techniques**

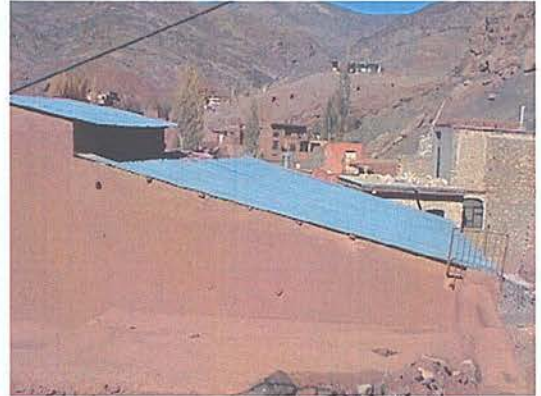
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<sup>1</sup> The researcher here refers to the character of buildings as the inherent treatment of surfaces, curves, lines and fenestration and order in the way form is characterized and personalized with the imprint of their occupants. The stark differences between old and new are apparent.





**Figure 11: New details**



**Figure 12: New profiles**

Figure 9 demonstrates the ‘seductive temptation’ of adopting modern construction and new building materials and products such as steel doors and concrete achieve a disproportionate influence in the way facades and fenestration are treated, particularly when it come to the restoration or renovation of historical buildings. The end result is a total chaos and breakaway from the original styles and integrity in the sequence of buildings or their proportions at every level.

Figures 10, 11 and 12 demonstrate the merging of new materials with the old and distortions of the roof profiles to suit the new purpose of the building types. Particularly the skyline, exemplifies the destruction of urban continuity and the lateral harmony in flat roof pattern and relationship of neighbourhood, thus changing the overall identity of the place as a whole.

1.9. The Logic and Sensibility of the Settlement

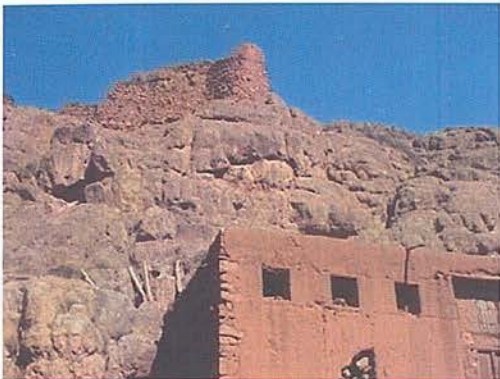


Figure 13: The unity

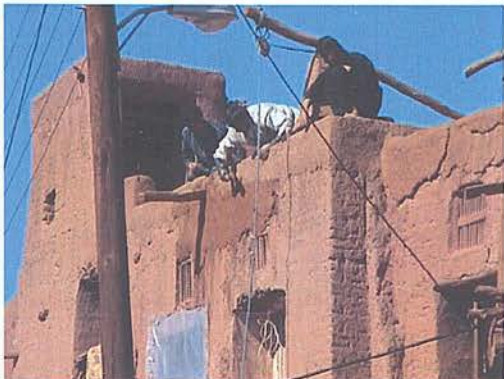


Figure 14: The conventional skills



Figure 15: The routes

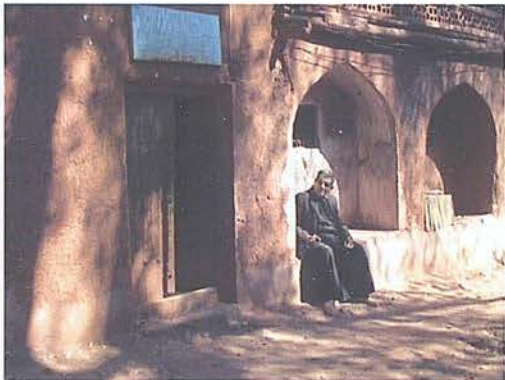


Figure 16: Integration with lifestyle



Figure 17: The old ways



Figure 18: Buffer zone with nature



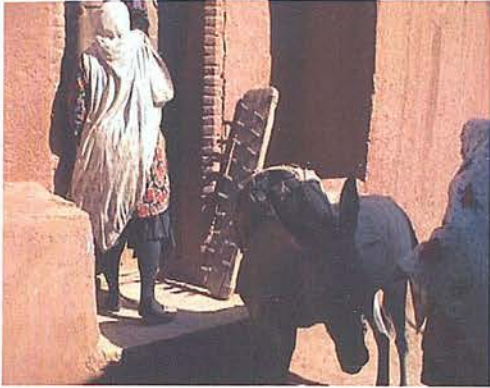


Figure 19: Traditional life-style



Figure 20: The human proportions



Figure 21: The relaxing way of life, of habitation and use.

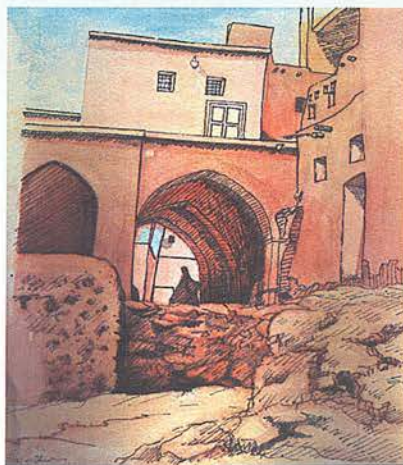


Figure 22: The romantic mixture of time and space

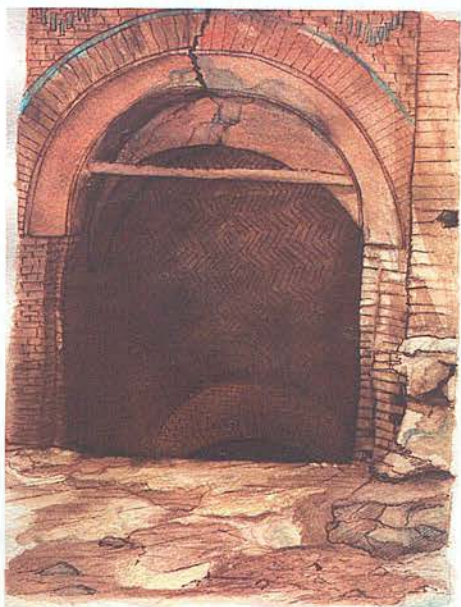


Figure 23: The disused conversional life style

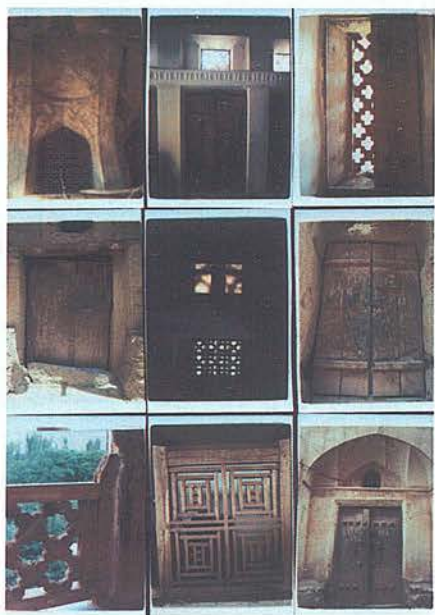


Figure 24: The use of openings and ventilation, light and passage.

Figure 13-24 demonstrate the general character and unity of the buildings in relation to their content, continuity of material and an overall link that demonstrates the

integration of different layers of rules and conventions which had evolved throughout the ages, consistent with the collective history, the memory of the place and its inhabitants.

Figure 13 shows the fort on top of the mountain, the mountain itself and the houses below – as if painted in one colour.

Figure 14 demonstrates the traditional restoration in the application of thin layers of clay reinforced with hay, an art of construction almost lost today in Iran.

Figures 15 and 17 are views of the fire temple of Harpak, which dates to well before Christianity, and now adapted as a place of habitation and as an underpass to the public along the main route through the settlement. Figure 17 reminds us of the inhabitants' relationship with themselves, their roads and livestock (donkeys). This is an expression of unity, which, when examined by the researcher, becomes a prime point of reference in the revitalisation programme.

Figure 16 demonstrates the harmony of man and his environment, the expansion of the building development into the street as part of the community's shared utility, and the blending in of the dwellings themselves, regardless of the public or private domain. Figure 17 demonstrates the strength of the community and their built environment, this theme motivates the researcher to study in detail the reasons behind the overwhelming strength of the indigenous people in resisting changes to their social, cultural and life-style throughout their entire history.

Figure 18 demonstrates the integrity and segregation/integration of the man-made environment with the natural existing physical forms of nature. There are no dead



ends or cul-de-sac's in Abianeh. Taxonomic segregation and ordering harmony between the two environments direct the researcher towards these unique qualities. Through studies and analyses of the dwellings and the settlement as a whole, reasons are identified. From these certain conclusions are made to help map out the inherent qualities not so readily apparent on initial inspection. This, then, helps to introduce a series of principles for the revitalisation program.

Figure 19 demonstrates the equality and emancipation of women and their liberty to the same status as men, more in terms of ownership and responsibility throughout the settlement. The researcher looks extensively at the overall Gerontological social structure and laws that govern Abianeh, in relation to people's genders and the role of the family and its structure. This leads to realistic clues concerning the inner organisation of the family unit and its unique quality and impact on this local society as a whole which, in turn, emphasise radical differences with the country at large. These provide yet more reasons why Abianeh can be considered different to elsewhere and yet, within its perimeters, why a similarity of habitation and secular humanism has evolved, unique only to Abianeh. Many layers of such inner qualities are inserted into this dissertation and presented here as factors ultimately giving rise to a potential solution for a revitalisation program paying due deference to iconographical symbolism used in the lives of the inhabitants. Examples include working tools such as the harvesting tool leaning against the wall which appears on their vertical tomb stones with symbols of the sun and the moon, as opposed to that of Islam, (stones laid flat with inscribed koranic quotations is the customary practice today). The tombs demonstrate their pagan and deeply rooted cultural differences and

their strength in retaining such a way of life in the face of great social and economic changes in the country at large.

Figure 20 demonstrates the scale of dwellings in relation to man. There is little that the A.J Metric Handbook or any conventional architectural standards can offer which can apply to this settlement. The dimensions are unique, indeed made for and from a very specific way of life. This is a settlement with dwellings and scale which are unique, and relate to the inner structure of the settlement and to the 'magic of form', to content and its environment, all knitted together as one blanket. The researcher considers this phenomenon at depth and over 5 years draws and surveys the building types most relevant, and then compares them before recording them as archives for reference - as opposed to compiling building standards handbook. Because all buildings are different in Abianeh, it being a heterotrophic (non uniform ever changing and varied in its typology) settlement, it is inappropriate to ascribe isolated recommendations. Holistic solutions to a particular project are preferred because the ideas imbedded in the project give rise to the jigsaw puzzle and, hence, the inherent ideas of fitting into the settlement and the collective whole, thereby dictating a style and unity common to them all. These have been expressed in terms of recommendations intended for the National Heritage agency and scholars nationwide, as part of Iran's revitalisation program.

Figure 21 demonstrates the usage of Buildings as an aspect of integrated life. Mrs Ashrafi whose husband has recently died is working on the roof sawing a garment. The researcher looks into the sectional taxonomy of the habitation and the use of building types and components, relating them to the inhabitant's social and cultural



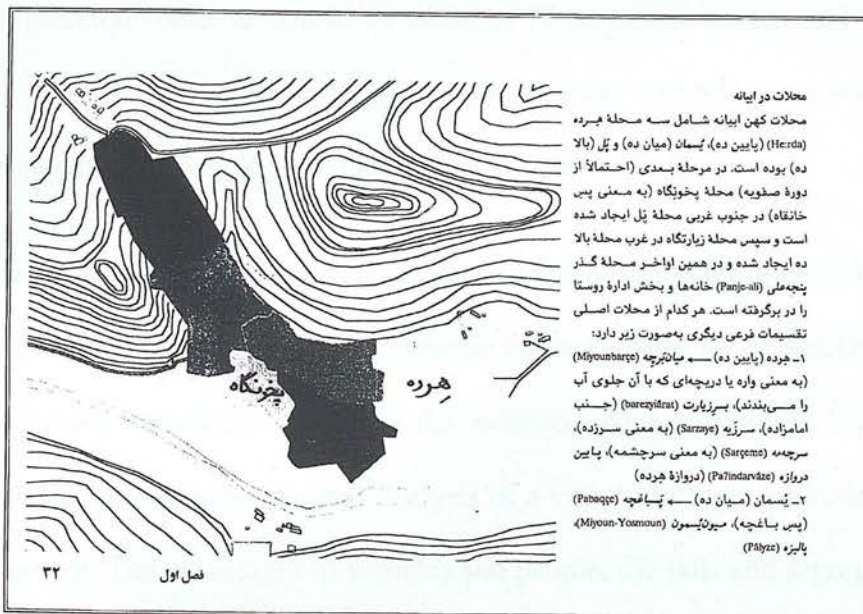
lifestyles. The search for and evaluation of the values and the importance of different elements within the organised lifestyle is mapped as a pattern of life which has to be respected and strengthened by protection and understanding. These findings are then compiled and presented to the national heritage organisation for preservation and revitalisation programmes.

Figures 22 and 23 are two of the free-hand studies made of the settlement by the researcher leading to more romanticised idealist representations of the place through the medium of water colours. This series of paintings, water colours and sketches have, in part, been deposited with the National Heritage Body of Iran for preservation and recording of these endangered buildings and key spaces which have been lost through the intrusions of modernity. Figure 23 is the water well in the central region of the settlement. Thanks to piped water now readily available throughout the settlement, these elements are no longer used and are falling under rapid disrepair. The function of fetching water and the associated socialising and interaction of the townsfolk along the journey throughout the settlement was a daily ritual, which bonded the inhabitants together. Conservation of water and avoiding contaminating the main source was an important part of the life of the settlement. Now, all of this is lost and if by any chance water becomes scarce, the village encounters a phenomenon of dependency on the “system” which the dwellers never had had before. These elements are well established by the research and have been identified, dwelling by dwelling, and as a series of elements to be ‘re-injected’ as part of the revitalisation program, thereby restored and retained for historical reference and tourism.

Figure 24 depicts some of the internal and external details of a building,



demonstrating the specific character of the place. The researcher looks at the settlement in its microcosm and records the details and commonness of style and crafts. The special quality of and attention to specific details and qualities to be retained are emphasized. Through detail drawings and analysis of the materials and references to their use throughout the settlement, and then referring to them and their evolution in order to identify clues as to their date and historical references, in turn directs attention to the overall mapping of the way these details were applied.



**Figure 25: Regional Identity - part of the original submission to the National Heritage of Iran by the author.**

Figure 25 was the first result following the digitalisation of the satellite photograph. One of the techniques adopted in this research was to create a system by means of which people and buildings could be analysed together. A ‘Cadastre’\* system, applied to help control population and monitor movements and developments of buildings and the expansion of cities and their inherent different layers of infrastructure, was

used. An aerial map from the National Geographic Society of Iran was purchased and the Ordinance survey map of the area drawn to a scale of 1:1250, 1:1000, 1:500. These detail drawings were tested on the ground and against some ground surveys carried out during the Pahlavi period and obtained from the National Heritage of Iran, archives department in Isfahan.

As demonstrated in Figure 5.

These maps therefore became crucial in terms of Plano-metric syntax and regional identity as a plotted area of facts, set against the existing and historical events, the urban development, and consequent changes and recommendations.

The outcome of this exercise resulted in creating different layers of drawings based on the aerial map which then is made to demonstrate various categories of building types, urban development, ruined buildings and the location of the routes, the location of prominent buildings, and a typological analysis of a variety of types of building and their development. The movement of vehicles and people, the falls and segregation of nature, buildings, lead to many other layers, and finally to the proposals based on the revitalisation programme. In this way, overlays on this plan establish entities and determine laws and boundaries and structural zoning. Figure 25 is the first realised plan of different zones within the settlement which are planned metrically for the first time. The zones are:

- g. “Hardeh” meaning lower part of the village**
- h. “Yosman” or “Miandeh” meaning middle of the settlement**

- i. **“Pal” Or “Baladeh” meaning the top of the settlement**
- j. **“Pakhoongah” was named after a house “Khanegae” which is explained later.**
- k. **“Pangeh-Ali” which is located at the beginning of the settlement outside the main gate.**

The above zones were found also to have subdivisions, resulting in more personalised descriptions of neighbourhoods.

The analysis therefore discovers a whole complex structure hidden behind labels of identity. Importance is given by the use, by the culture and their history. All is engraved into the settlement like an inexhaustible veil covering the entire urban fabric. This knowledge was mapped, recorded and used to further strengthen the revitalisation programme.

### **1.10. Vertical History**

In 1981 the researcher was introduced to the concept of vertical history by Dalibor Vassili of the AA school of architecture at the Polytechnic of Central London, now the University of Westminster. Essentially the idea states that we are not isolated beings in space but beings standing on all that we have been from the inception of our cultural heritage until now. Consequently, the Parthians or the Sassanians are not completely dead but live on through us, and that Rome or Greece may be hundreds of kilometres away, but their culture and history are actually below one's feet, giving rise to the very reason for our being, through the imprint of what they left behind



through wars and cultural inheritance.

Abianeh is no exception. - The message is on the doors, the walls and the landscape, and in people's hearts and minds and their stories. It can be read and recorded as it always has been throughout history. Throughout this research the researcher has persistently dug deeper and deeper to find the reasons behind the individuality of these people and to try and map their rationale and reasoning so as to develop an understanding of how they respond and operate. The researcher is aware that no revitalisation programme will ever succeed in a place such as Abianeh, if the people have no role in the process. In fact, it is these very people who will have to revitalise it and not some external body. The researcher substantiates this reality throughout the research so as to establish norms by means of which 'we can talk didactically' and make reasonable suggestions, which, in turn, can satisfy the authorities who otherwise cannot accept self-rule and the locals who cannot accept interference in their lives.

The research involves mapping out the physical vertical history of the residents and then looks within it for guidance and an underlying pattern. What is discovered here is then applied as a rule to the overall suggestions made in the final programme of revitalisation. Figure 26 demonstrates the initial attempt.

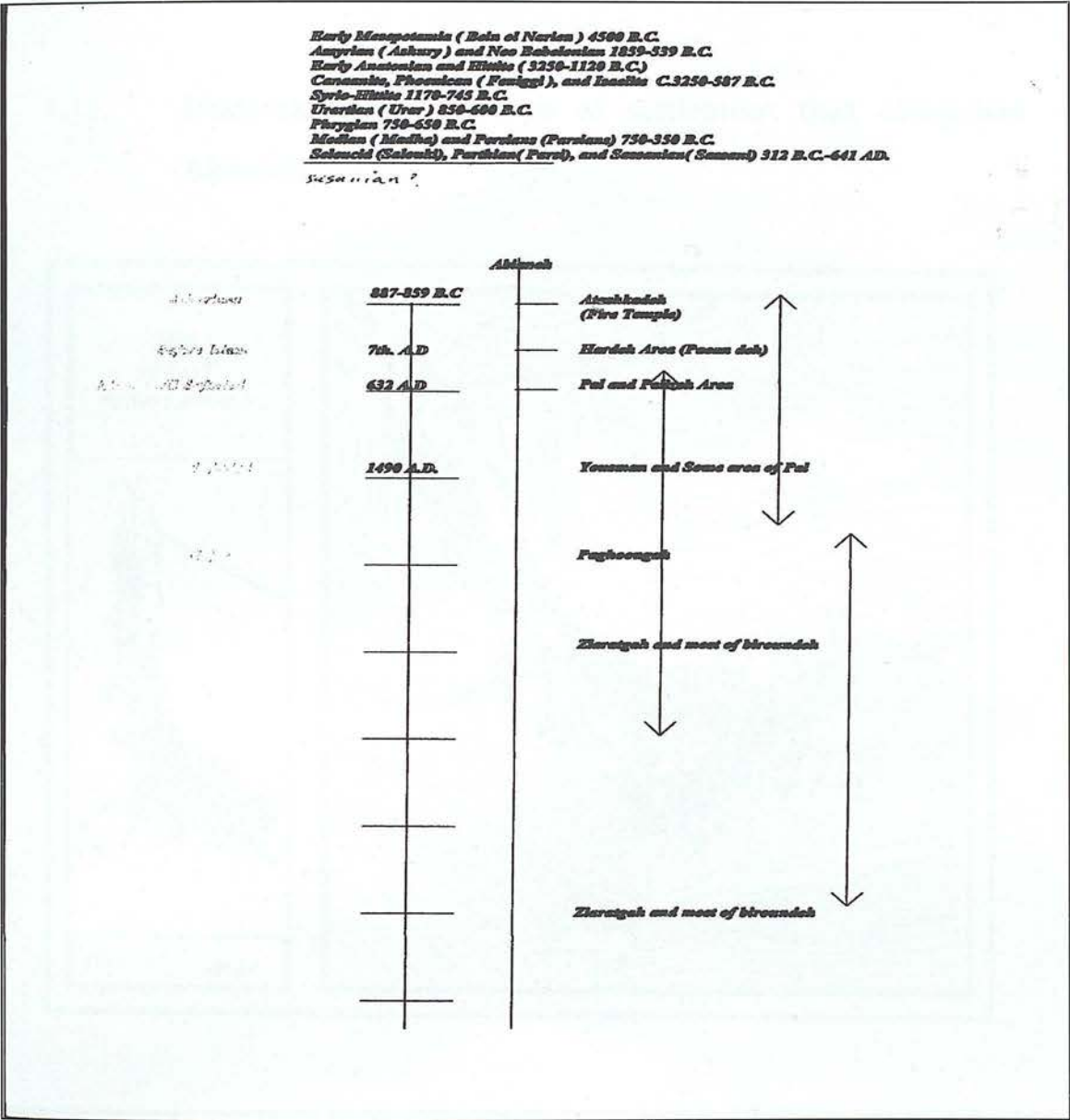


Figure 26: Vertical history of Abianeh

### 1.11. Understanding the type of settlement that comprises Abianeh

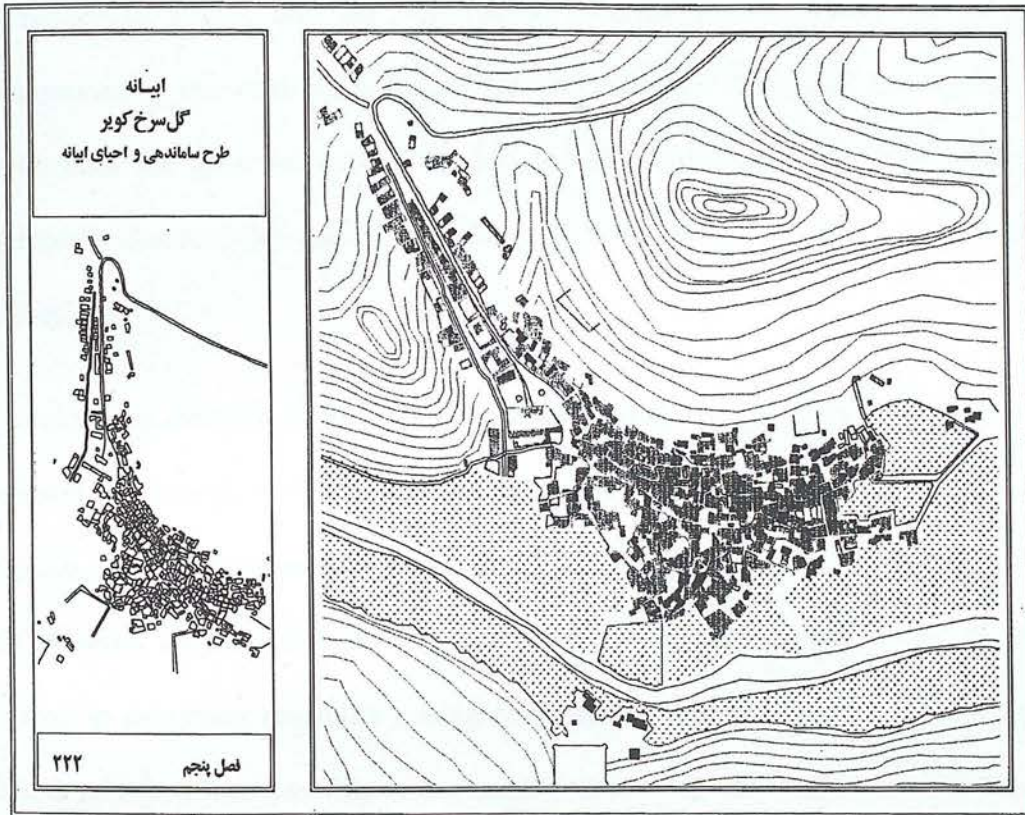


Figure 27: Heterotopias origins of the settlement.

The ordering sensibility of what we call *Heterotopia*<sup>2</sup>, this undulating ever-changing settlement, has its roots well before Islam, deep in the classical and the ancient

<sup>2</sup> Heterotopia: Dimitri Porphyrios, Sources of Modern Eccelectism. Academy Editions, London, 1288, p.88



civilization of Iran. The researcher is aware that nothing can be born out of nothing and there can be no object without its history of evolution. Time and moments in history change and with it we progress and therefore meanings change and our social structure also change. Therefore, no-one can suggest a revitalisation plan which regresses into history. The idea is to develop reasons for continuity and satisfaction of the indigenous people and the preservation of a culture, which is not yet fully contaminated by the world at large and can still be saved. Its people can continue to benefit from the great heritage of having a settlement so rich and intact that, for generations to come, they and we can marvel at its complexity, specificity and unique qualities.

The researcher therefore uses the idea of typological analyses and the study of the development through a single idea of a dwelling that they may have used at the inception of the settlement to the present day, thereby mapping all the variations and their locations within the settlement. This assists in several ways in developing the program: to determine structural zoning of different types of settlement from a single cell unit of a box-like dwelling to a complex three-story building; to identifying the internal and external elements and studying their movements through history; how the W.C or kitchen moved to the buildings and how they related to their daily lives or the settlement as a whole. In fact it is through a study of type that we become aware of what to build, of where to build, and in fact how to restore in this context. The researcher's final programme concerns suitable Building regulations for the National Heritage organization to apply to what are considered grade one and two listed buildings. Typological study therefore is crucial in determining the distribution and the logic of form that derives from a series of variant types of different

elements, which grew out of the single cell, but ultimately became a school, a mosque or a house.

Ever since the first house was built, a sense of order and a taxonomically distribution of form\* in relation to content took place in Abianeh - a kind of chain reaction ignited by various needs and necessities which were socially and economically driven. However, underneath it all, there arguably exists a certain Dionysian or Apollonian ancient spirit which thrives and perseveres even today. This is emphasised by the researcher as something that should be protected and not overcome and destroyed.

Questions arose: what was their way of thinking that drove them to build such unity and achieve such survival against all the odds? and, based on what rule or convention did it all begin? The idea of typology assisted in ensuring that these subjects were addressed.

### **1.12. Plano Metric Syntax of the Settlement**

The notion and geometry of order, which has greatly influenced the modernism of today and embodying the instrument of 'magic', which shaped our towns and modern cities, along their expansion and explosion, never happened in Abianeh. The social system of confining themselves to themselves and not mixing with outsiders had much to do with the idea of self-preservation. For them sudden growth was unthinkable. It did not exist in their vocabulary. For them development of this type could not be borne out of one mind alone, The settlement presents itself as one blanket of costumes, random growth and development. The growth presents a pattern; the pattern is new in every experience and refers to one canon of genius amongst them



all, that unifying element - the “blanket” or “vale” which unites the settlement in its semantic, syntactic and unity.

That incoherent unity, without a unifying element or order which was not rationalised and at first glance seems arbitrary and labelled with “chaos” or disorder” is known to us as “Heterotopia”.

“The state of things laid or placed assigned sites so very different from one another that it is impossible to define a locus common to them all”. The heterotopy set out to create deep relationships within the vicinity or the neighbourhood and the social cultural ties, which dictated the brief. Whilst Homotopia sets out to break away from this tradition, that was as old as time and had its secrets, not in the heretics of the Heterotopia, but had its ideas in simplification and repetition and standardisation and copy. This is what the Durand<sup>3</sup> at Ecole, the polytechnic and the ascendants understood as “Modernism”.

Copying the patterns, forms and shapes, missing out on the reasons behind the form, and giving rise to an ordering sensibility, have dominated our lives until today. The researcher therefore is aware of the wider implication of such a revitalisation program and aims to make a point of this issue in the research.

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<sup>3</sup> Durand, Jean Nicholas Louis, Precis de Lecons, d' Architecture donnees a l'Ecole Royal the Polytechnic, Paris, 1821-23

In Abianeh this sense of Heterotopia still exists and the invading homotopic influences are gradually moving to destroy it, therefore, the recommendations are clearly aimed at preventing this from happening any further.

In the heterotypic ally organised settlement, the sense of individuality, uniqueness, variety in character, style and form, together with a sense of being part of a group rather than an isolated secular humanism is emphasised. The homotopic idea of commonness in all things misses all of this and dismisses the verticality of history all together, degenerating into a form of copying and invention rather than development.

“Heterotopia is therefore that curious ordering sensibility which discriminates between independent coherence, while sustaining cohesion between the parts only by defaults and through special adjacency”

**“...The art of building is born out of a pre-existing germ; nothing whatsoever comes from nothing... The type is a sort of kernel around and in accordance to which the various that the object is susceptible of are ordered...”<sup>4</sup>**

The type here is represented by the inner germ, “the vale”, linking the entire settlement together and giving it a unity and bond, which can be realised only through time and development of the programme of neighbourhood and vicinity - the nearness of man, to his environment. But type is cultural and historical in the mind and hearts of the inhabitants and cannot be realised by others as well, due to its diversity within relationships. It is the people and only the people who know what their settlement

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<sup>4</sup> Quatremere de Quincy: Dictionnaire Historique d'Architecture, 1832.

needs to be and they understand its rules instinctively. This also explains therefore that the typology of a heterotypic settlement is ever growing and developing, consequently it can never be fully realised in its perfection as a natural being happens to be.

“Nothing old is ever reborn but it never completely disappears either and anything that has ever been always re-emerges in new forms”. Alvar Aalto understood this fact very well and was drawn abstractly to the ideas inbred in such hetero-topic settlements as Abianeh. The researcher therefore makes a point of the recommendations having such links with any urban continuity, which may be planned, in the settlement or outside it.

Therefore whatever the solution, the answer begins and ends with the indigenous people themselves, their involvement and solutions. The researcher had made this the centre of his investigation, a spinal backbone to the collective memory of the settlement and its people.

1.13. Typological Analysis and the Origins of the Archetype

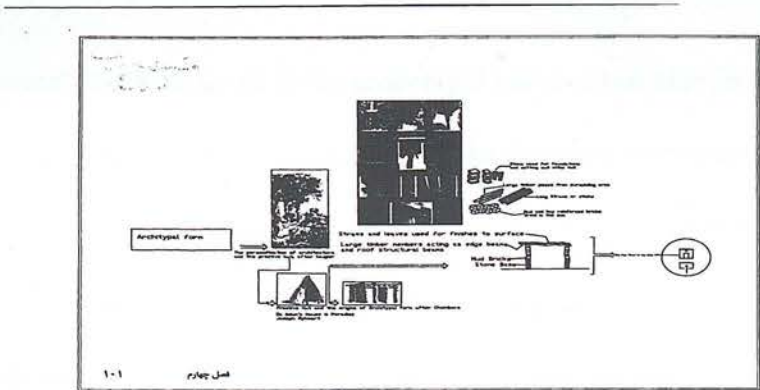


Figure 28: Typological analyses and the origins of the archetype. The expansion of the single cell unit along the horizontal and the vertical plane



Figure 28 above demonstrates an evolutionary development of the form of a single dwelling "cell" in Abianeh, depicted from Abbe Laugier's idea of the primitive hut and the philosophy of the origins of all architectural form from Nature.<sup>5</sup> It is important to note that in Iran, especially in the regions such as Abianeh - mostly flat desert spaces - Man could not readily look at trees coming together and forming a shelter. They were more likely to have dug into the ground or to have lived in mountain caves or provided themselves with lean-to shelters made of twigs and mud, in a conical or rectilinear fashion. Therefore it is unlikely that the early Iranians would have looked at large broad leaved trees when twisted olive and dry pomegranate trees, and small fruit trees were the norm. It is therefore logical that they developed differently and it was not the primitive hut which gave rise to the first temple but the primitive shelter that gave rise to the first single cell dwelling. It is interesting to note that till today the nomadic tribes are erecting exactly the same shelters in the desert as did their forefathers centuries ago: rectilinear boxes made of dry laid stone covered on top with twigs and bushes to form a flat roof. The Iranians were more concerned in this region with the direct sun on their heads than the rain; therefore pitched roofs were never considered viable option.

Not only does Abianeh obey this rule in its archetypal essence but also in the generic detailing of its entire settlement being made of the permutations and combinations of the single cell derived from the original archetypal form. Today it can be observed that the construction of the walls and roofs are exactly the same: the use of stone for walls, timber for roofs and even twigs and wild bushes on top, forming a flat roof.

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<sup>5</sup> Abbe Laugier: On Adam's house in Paradise, (reprint)1977.

It is important to recognise that this is not due to the inhabitants' backwardness but a cultural value that was felt to be greater than anything they valued - an identity with their physical surroundings that has astonished visitors to Abianeh throughout the history of the settlement until today.

The 'type' as a kind of nucleus around which a number of ideas in keeping with that nucleus evolve and give rise to an idea and perfect it in its realisation, gives understanding and meaning to the work of art. In the 1750s in France, this was seen by Quatremere de Quincy as saving works of art which until that day were being threatened by a loss in aura and metaphysical meaning. This idea of type, as the soul of the settlement imbedded in the single cell as its archetype, developed into a multitude of functions that gave rise to many variations in building types, hence resulting collectively in a type of settlement. The research panellises the individual development of each relevant dwelling and points out in detail the differences from the single cell and the development of the single cell's use in all its aspects, to elaborate special interpretation. Through this exercise, the research demonstrates a complete evolutionary tree of the settlement and the different forms derived from the original single cell. This exercise has many applications, particularly in restoration and revitalization programmes, but also including building regulations and identification of different types in different regions. Figures 29 and 30 demonstrate the entirety of the exercise and its results, mapping out the development of the single cell along the contours of the mountain, up the mountain, down the valley and along the main circulation route.

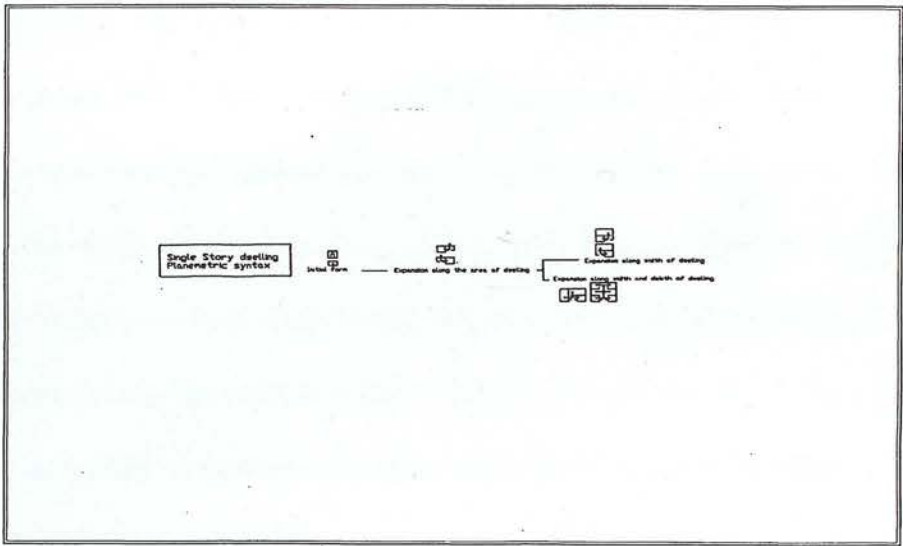


Figure 29: The expansion of the single cell unit along the horizontal and the vertical plain

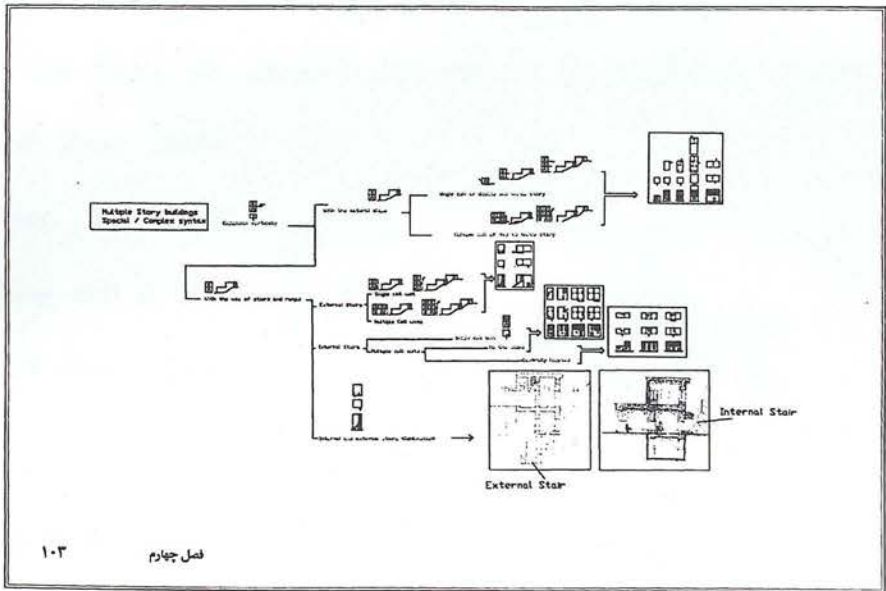


Figure 30: The expansion of forms different complex typologies

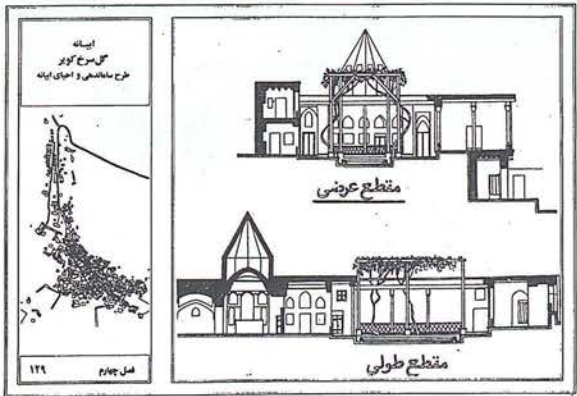


1.14. Typological Taxonomy of a Single Dwelling

The single cell unit had to house every need of a family at one time. A dwelling comprised a room with a door, originally with a permanent vent or open window above, which admitted light and air into the room while exhausting smoke from the indoor fire. The walls, ceiling and floors would have been traditionally constructed. The building would have been south facing and would have been constructed on a flat surface or terrace along the contour of the mountain, in various relationships with the fall of the mountain, sometimes partially imbedded into the mountain, or free standing; but never butting entirely against the mountain.

The single cell space comprised a sitting area, eating area, guest area, storage area, cooking area with inside and outside facilities. Housed within were the small tools, cooking facilities, bedding, clothing etc. Throughout the section of architecture and typology of this thesis the research demonstrates the evolution, expansion and movement of these items and functions from the single dwelling cell to the more complex house types of today.

Figure 31: The Emamzadeh at the end of the Settlement



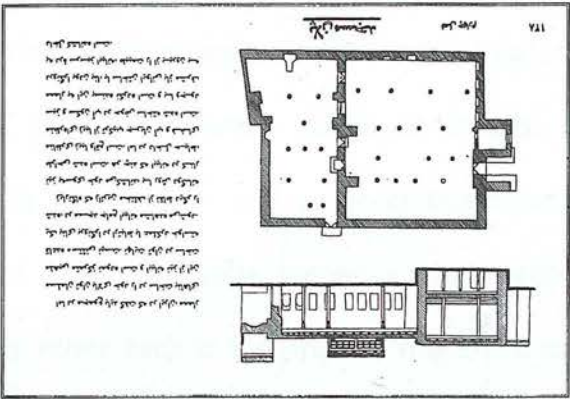


Figure 32: The Jameh mosque in the centre of the Settlement

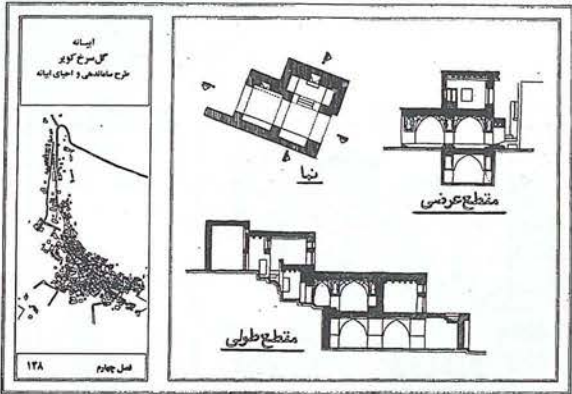


Figure 33: The Fire Temple of "Harpak" As identified by Maxim Siro, now owned by three different owners and used as integrated part of their house at different levels.

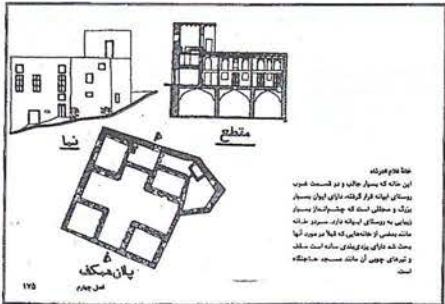
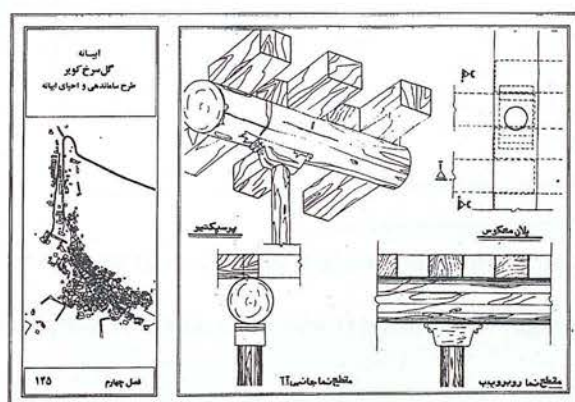


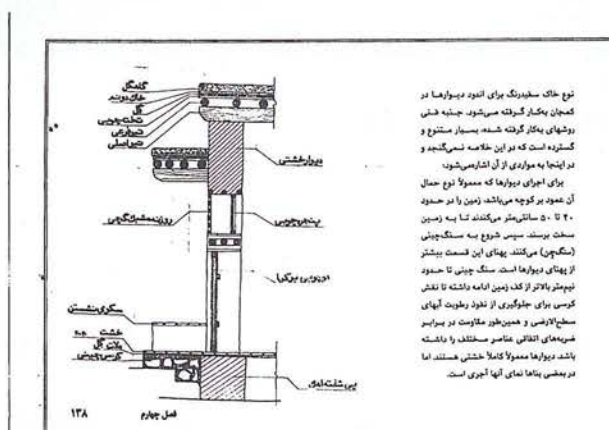
Figure 34: The "Gholam nadir shah House", in the style of "Chahar Soffeh" house type.



Figures 31, 32, 33 and 34 demonstrate the extent of the survey in terms of as-built drawings made by the researcher as a permanent record of the existing buildings, their specific details and their typologically advanced houses. In themselves these incorporate a complex organisation and an inner expansion of the single cell's functions into realised spaces and cells, having a relationship with the core living areas which ultimately relate back to the original single cell unit. The research also incorporates any social, cultural and architectonic elements added to the single cell since its evolution - to demonstrate the eclectic elements inherited throughout the ages - yet distinguishing it from the main core of the spirit of the place and unity of the over all "Veil Effect".



**Figure 35: A plate from the series of study on the construction details of the buildings.**



**Figure 36: Cross section of a single cell units entrance as part of studies carried out on the building constructional details and their study.**

Figures 35 and 36 record parts of the structural detailing carried out in the investigation, in order to study the techniques of construction and their relationship with the settlement's specific organisation of building materials and their applications as part of the architectural and typological understanding of the settlement. The researcher studies this issue in detail and demonstrates the extensive intelligence of the use of building materials in accordance with their propriety and purpose. This establishes yet another layer to the settlement's specific quality and uniqueness.

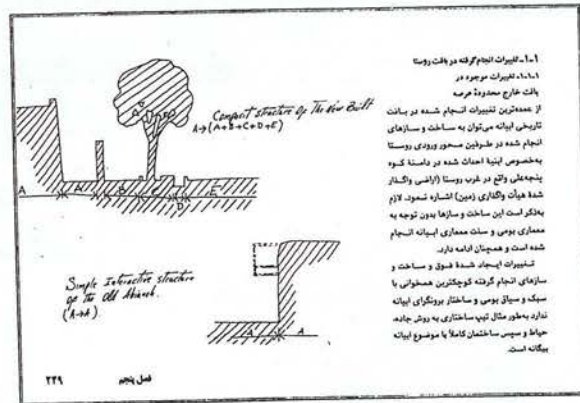


Figure 37: Demonstrates the break in traditional understanding of the urban form and elements with in the settlement and the introduction of all new types in to the region.

Figure 37 and complementary studies carried out have been produced to identify the foreign elements in the settlement, to isolate them and record them as foreign elements and, hence, to prohibit their further usage through out the settlement. The research demonstrates through detailed analysis of these elements and their origins that the destruction of a culture can happen through many layers and the importing of all manner of intrusions into a form of life. This results in a disruption in the continuity of the built environment and 'alienation' in the hearts of the people. The damage eventually further contributes to the devaluation and diminishing importance of the existing built fabric and value system. The research provides a detail study of

these elements and presents them as a set of finite recommendations in order to practically implement their rules as points of departure from the recent norm - therefore leading to a better way of revitalisation.

1.15. Analyses of the Existing Conditions

In order to establish scientific facts and to provide a pragmatic base to the research based on hard objective evidence while overseeing the real-life situation across the settlement, it was considered necessary to devise standard methods to methodically examine the parameters of life with all ages.

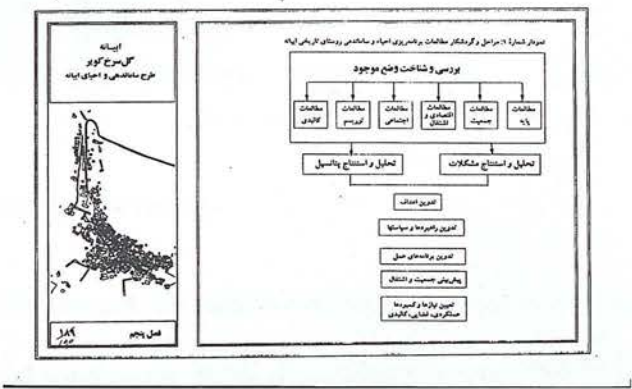


Figure 38: The system of project analyses and project management and research for the main revitalisation program.

Figure 38 demonstrates the study procedure and the strategic procedure taken from basic studies of the existing conditions: commercial, sociological, political and population, thereby building up layers essential in understanding the subject of discourse to its fullest. This leads to a summary and analysis of various issues crucial in the research programme, proceeding finally to matters which have been deduced as a result of the study, and which categorically define the problem areas and overall views of the inhabitants and those of the government. This section confirmed in



factual form the hypothesis that the researcher was then seeking to address, and it was further established that the matters causing the demise were not necessarily the obvious ones identified at the outset.

طرح سادماندهی و اسباب روستای ایپانه کاشان تاریخ .....

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| ۱- مشخصات روستا | نام روستا | نام گروه | شماره نقشه | شماره پلاک |
| ۲- نوع کاربری   | آب و برق  | آب و گاز | سنگ و چوب  | خشت و چوب  |
| ۳- طاقچه        | سنگریز    | چوبی     | آجر        | سار        |
| ۴- تعداد واحدها | یک طبقه   | دو طبقه  | سه طبقه    | چهار طبقه  |
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Figure 39: The standard form of enquiry

Figure 39 is one of the sheets devised to establish the exact information required from each inhabitant of the settlement. Each sheet relates to one dwelling and ownership. A total of 100% of the houses were visited and the entire settlement was mapped in terms of occupancy and the people's information. From this a whole series of further detailed study was then carried out into all aspects of the inhabitants' views and actual internal and external activities. Based upon these studies and the facts established previously, a series of graphs and charts was established to determine exactly the proportions of population, their preferences and the inner social, economic, political structure and dependencies, taking into consideration all issues relevant to the revitalisation programme outlined by the researcher.

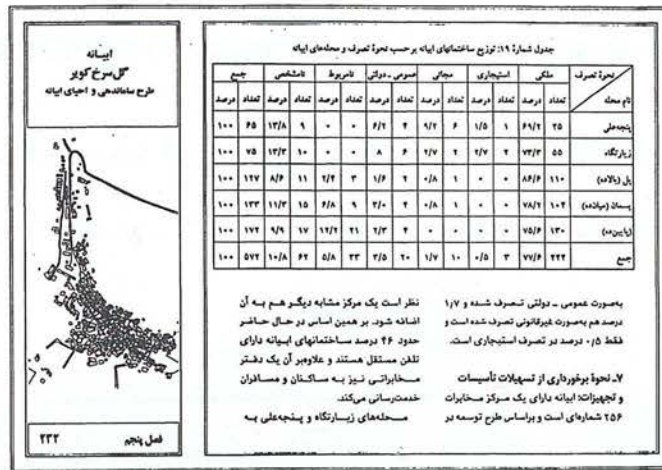


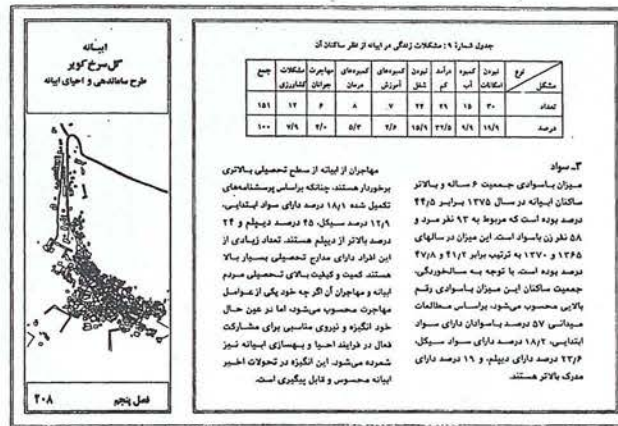
Figure 40: Depicting a typical example of the charts developed. This particular one looks into ownership and different types of ownership in all areas of the settlement.

Figure 40 looks into the ownership of the settlement. This particular research helps develop an understanding of who makes decisions concerning any particular property, the liability of its maintenance, establishing contacts for the application of law, and the owner / occupiers rights and so on. There are many examples of owners no longer willing to live in the settlement with consequences for the demise of their dwelling. Disrepair affects the neighbouring dwellings and consequently sets a whole chain of events/effects across the settlement involving its physical appearance. The settlement's defence mechanism against the environment collapses, often attributable to some of these dwellings causing obstructions to climatic changes, by entrapping rain water or by eventually collapsing and imposing structural difficulties on conterminous properties.

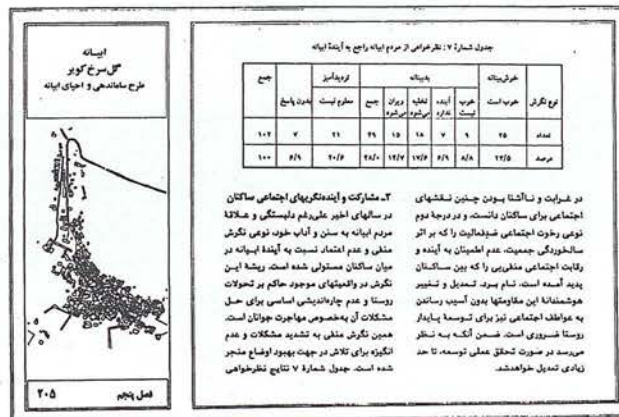
With the aid of these charts and the information obtained, the researcher was able to pinpoint these properties and their owners, and to bring together the various elements in the settlement needed to make decisions about such dwellings. Ultimately this

includes the National Heritage organisation and the central government.

The former is the body, which forms the collective whole in order to help revitalise the settlement. Some of the other forms and survey results are included in the figures immediately below:



### Figure 41: General difficulties



### Figure 42: Peoples future predictions





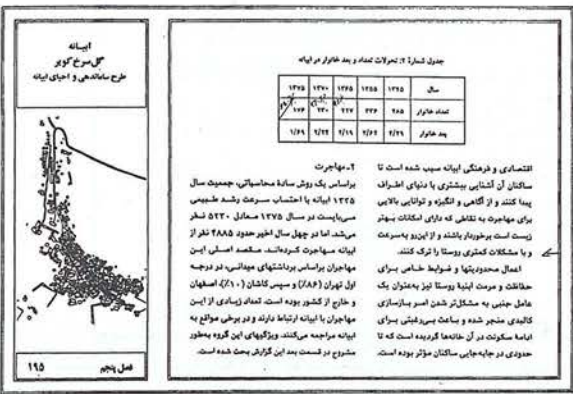


Figure 46: The chart of new generations and their survival rate during the past five years.

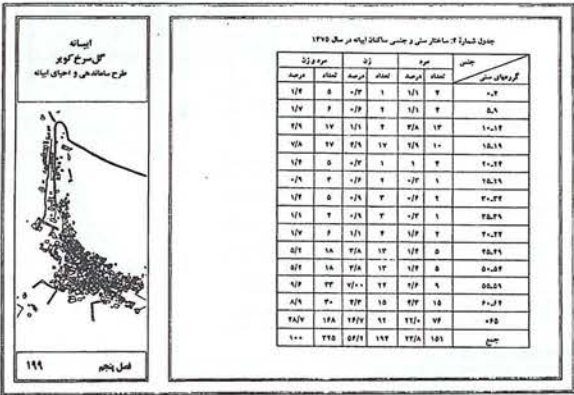


Figure 47: The make-up of the age groups and genders during the year 1375 (1997) (Men and Woman).

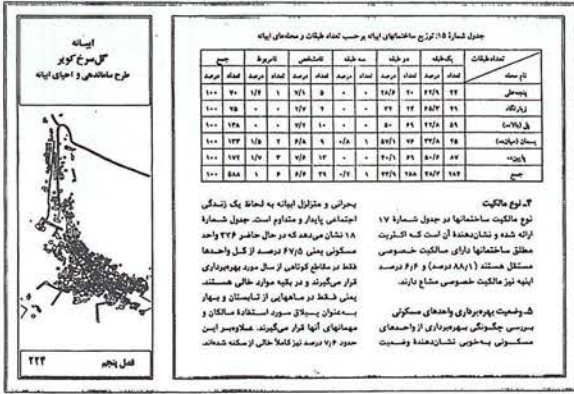


Figure 48: Distribution of housing in terms of their number of storeys and development in different locations within the settlement.



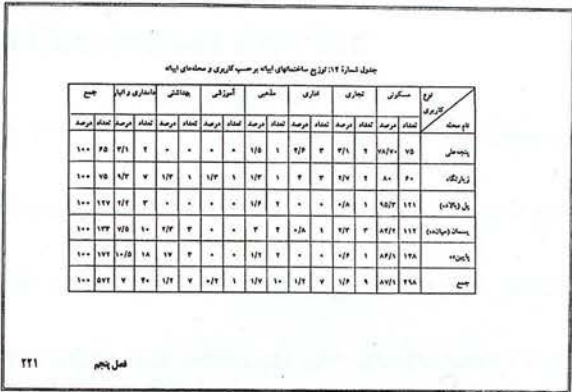


Figure 49: Distribution of housing in terms of their usage from residential to public and all private ownerships, distinguishing offices, shops and religious centres etc.

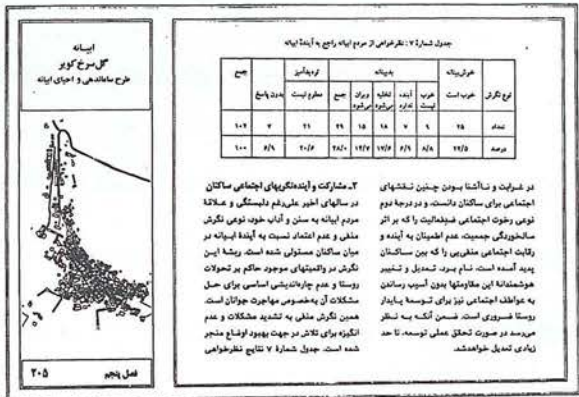


Figure 50: Prediction of the future of Abianeh as foreseen by its indigenous people.

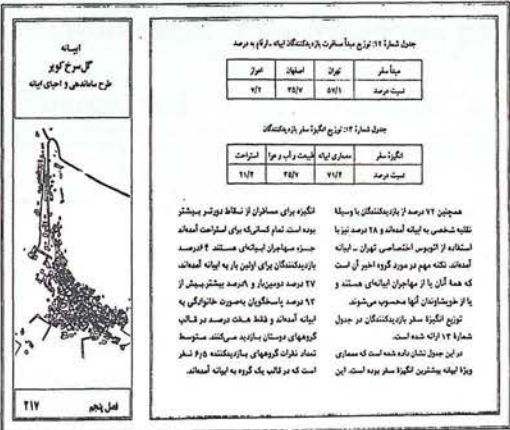


Figure 51: Chart of visitors to Abianeh from different destinations. b) The reasons for visiting the settlement by different people.

1.16. General Conclusions Reached

The Writer has attempted through the research to identify the resources existing in the community and those elements, whether social, historical, typological, economic, and so on, in order to provide an adequate knowledge with the potential to apply it to different disciplines. The writer has outlined the instruments required and made a comprehensive record, both technical and scientific in order to apply some kind of order based on the traditional order previously identified in the culture of the people and their own management skills. This provides essential technical data for restoration purposes and as a reference for use as a base for continuity.

The research has further identified the governmental issues and identified the appropriate body of government to become involved. One result concerns engaging in a dialogue leading towards a joint working, in order to implement some or all of its applications.

Consequently the writer has also devised guidelines as to the method of operation and the application of law, the involvement of the indigenous people of Abianeh, and the regeneration of work, finance and urban continuity, acceptable to all parties concerned.

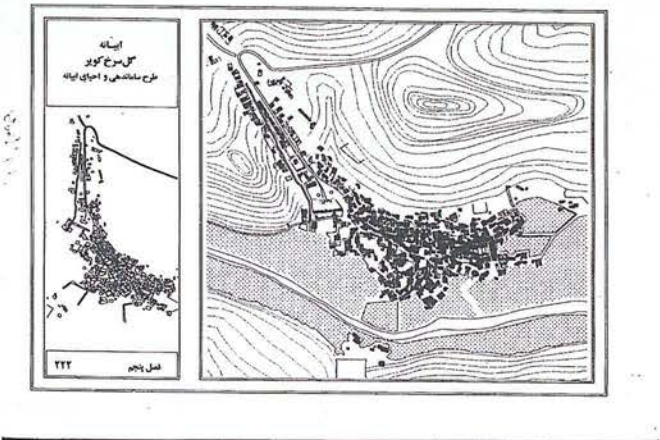


Figure 52: Proposed new usage plan showing the key houses of interest and protected zones and routes through the settlement.



Figure 53: Proposed Building regulation plan

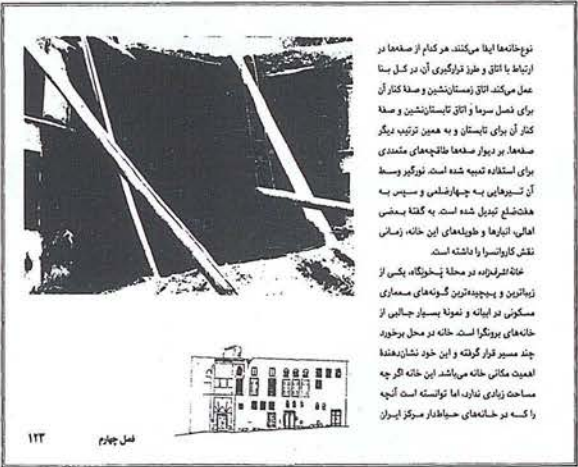


Figure 54: Proposed Legislative laws and purchase orders

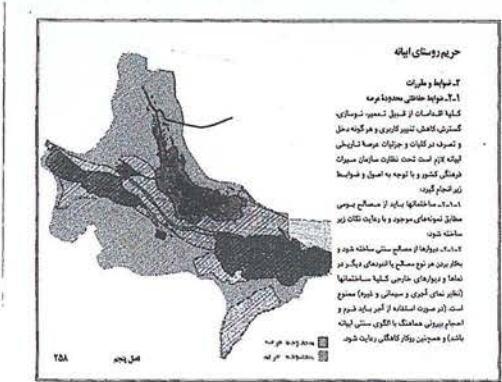


Figure 55: The Proposed inner and outer conservation belt

## Chapter Two: Climate and Geography

### Introduction

The climate of a region is determined by a variety of factors, including latitude, altitude, and proximity to large bodies of water. These factors influence the amount of solar radiation received, the distribution of precipitation, and the overall temperature range. Understanding the relationship between climate and geography is essential for studying the natural environment and its impact on human activities.

## Chapter Two:

### Question: The Climate and Geography



## Chapter Two: Climate and Geography

### Introduction

This chapter considers the settlement's location and identifies its macrocosm, while examining its morphological, Plano-metric, and contextual relationship with other neighbouring towns and cities. It refers to access to the natural environment and the influence of the environment on the people and their habitats.

### Climate and Geography

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Where is Abianeh?

Abianeh (Abianeh) is a village in Barzrood, a rural district located near Natanz city in the province of Esfehan. The village is located at a longitude of 51.36° and at latitude 33.35°. It is 2,220 meters above sea level.

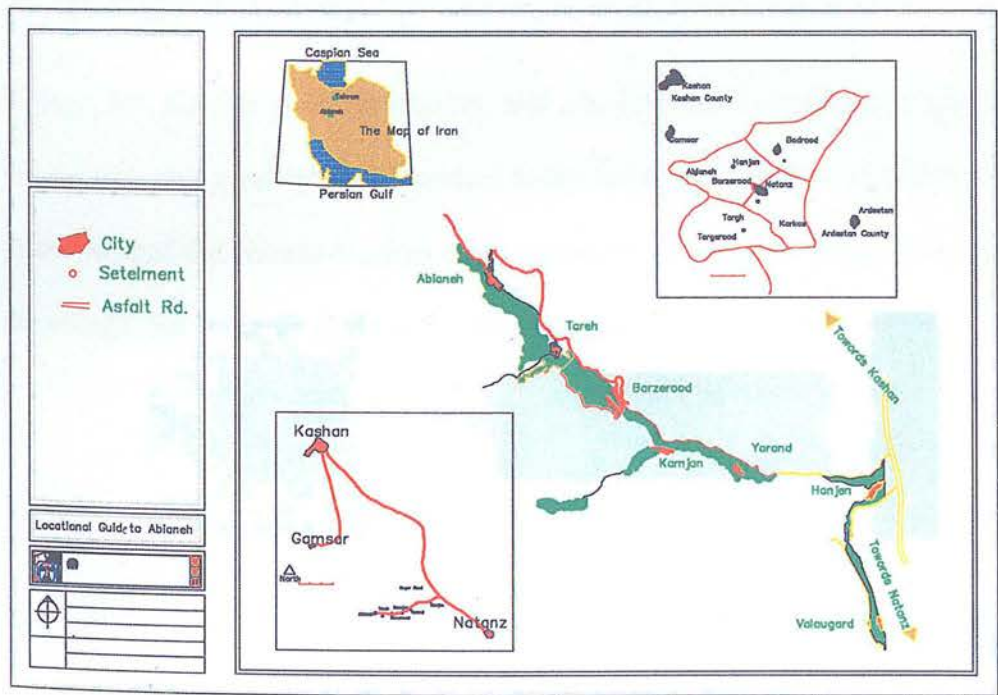


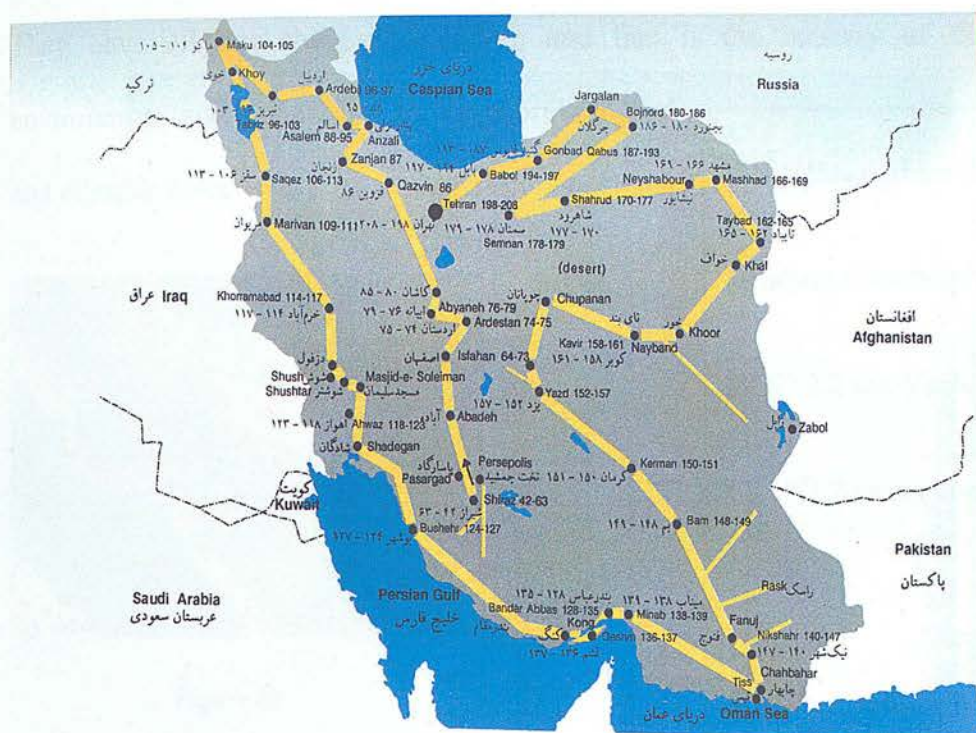


Figure 56: Location map of the Settlement and its adjoining settlements



Figure 57: Map of Iran and adjoining countries

Abianeh is situated at the north-west of Mt. Karkas in the central mountain range to the west of Iran. It is located between Mt. Domylnan which is at the south-west of the Village, Mt. Kalâjâr at the northwest, and Mt. Himand located to the northeast. The village occupies a valley 40 kilometres to the north-west of Natanz and 20 kilometres to the west of the Natanz-Kashan road. Barzrood River flows along the south side of the village, but is not as active as in previous times.



**Figure 58: Iran its main routes and regions**

Abianeh is surrounded on all sides by tall mountains, so much so that it looks like a natural dead end, being totally shielded by them. Until recently the only connection to the rest of the world was a rough pathway, which has been superseded by asphalt roads en route to Kashan and Natanz.

To reach Abianeh now, visitors must take the carriage way to Hanjen which forks from the Kashan-Natanz main road. Hanjen is 55 kilometres away from Kashan, while the distance between Hanjen and Abianeh is 25 kilometres. The valley at the foot of these mountains was connected by an old main road to the holy city of Qom, along with Kashan, Yazd, and Kerman. Along the route to Abianeh there are several other settlements: - Hanjen, Komjan, Barzrood, Yarand, and Tare, with Abianeh at the end of the valley. Each of these villages has special features, but being situated in a valley they have common features with regard to their location and topography.



They have all one thing in common and that is the mastery of their natural environment and adaptation to its morphological and climatic force.

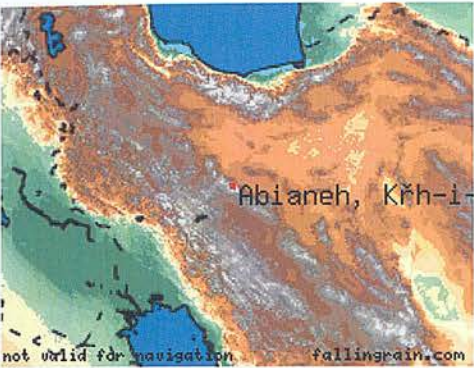


Figure 59



Figure 60

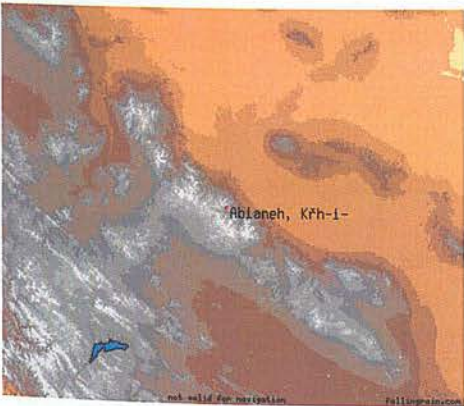


Figure 61: Satellite Photograph from outer space

National Geographic Co. Iran

| Places near Abianeh, Kōh-i- |          |                  |
|-----------------------------|----------|------------------|
| Heading                     | Distance | Name             |
| 22.5°                       | 2.2 nm   | Vesh             |
| 68.2°                       | 2.7 nm   | Hāmand, Kōh-e    |
| 136.4°                      | 2.7 nm   | šareh            |
| 203.4°                      | 1.7 nm   | Ābyāneh          |
| 270.0°                      | 0.8 nm   | Panjeh Āl, Kōh-e |
| 320.1°                      | 1.3 nm   | Deyresh,         |

### 2.1 The First Impression

At the edge of the central desert of Iran, at the end of a path interrupted by Mt. Karkas, located by the banks of a pleasant mild stream, and almost integrated with the mountain itself, Abianeh is found.

On first inspection its complexity is deceptive; Abianeh appears as step-like blocks of red mud cubes, built upon one another randomly, at the foot of a grey and red cliff overlooking a green valley. The panorama invites onlooker to take a closer look at the village and its well-integrated character. The inhabitants of this village display a warm greeting to visitors, and have many stories to tell.

On arrival at the principal Maidan or Public Square outside the main gates adjacent to the school in the Ziaratgah district, the visitor arrives at a small bakery and the only bank. At this point its quality may not appear to be different to any other settlement in the region. However, after passing through the main gates it is as if one has stepped through a conduit of time, with buildings made of mud brick settled on hard rocks and opening up to reveal their secrets. It is as if the inhabitants could have been there since time began.

The thousand-year-old trees, the whisper of streams, and the fresh breezes through the village, the quiet activity of people and their animals, 'costumed' men and women working and living along side each other, and the total absence of mechanization, can refresh any exhausted visitor after a long journey. With every twist and turn through the settlement, the visitor begins to realize that the community is quite extraordinary and does not operate according to rules established elsewhere.

The visitor observes the sky, the mountains and the valley together with the houses - all revealing a strange discipline. Trees surrounding the village are so old that they have a history of their own. The earth, which is the colour of muted fire, is everywhere, and people who greet you warmly along the winding alleys, have already acknowledged and seem to know all about you. Within minutes, almost the entire settlement knows of a visitor's arrival. Such is the planning and geographic awareness of the place. As the visitor wanders through the spaces, signs of an ancient culture become apparent: a culture which unites local man with nature, water and fire, as if they are all involved in a pattern of life expressed as one voice, in such a harmony that it seems not possible to understand such people at all. Such is vexation. It appears as though there is an inner secret hidden behind the lifestyle, the people and the place.

And yet should the visitor remain long enough in the remnants of this ancient place, he will discover that all this harmony is an illusion as life recedes, its youth absent and elsewhere. Only the heavy footsteps of an old man or woman break the silence from time to time. It is then that one feels that Abianeh waits to experience an inevitable phenomenon, which has terminated the essential character of many settlements around the world. What fortune is in store for this remote part of the world? The demise of the settlement should not be forsaken and forgotten as a consequence of the relentless advancement of modernity.

The visitor marvels at the beauty of this village. It seems as though the universal architect has transmitted his skill to generations through the passage of time in producing an amazing collection of God-given prototypes. Here the habitation of man and its permutations and combinations have intertwined with nature and seasonal



changes.

The connecting components and elements, projections, convex and concave parts of the roofs, fretted windows, and finally the magical colour of the soil, go hand in hand to create a magnificent harmony, all integrated naturally to cope with surface drainage. When the visitor encounters old men and women in their exotic garments, it seems as if he is being invited to some distant past. The secrets of eternity may be contained in this mysterious realm. Their lives and the meaning behind their existence tantalize.

2.2. Geomorphology

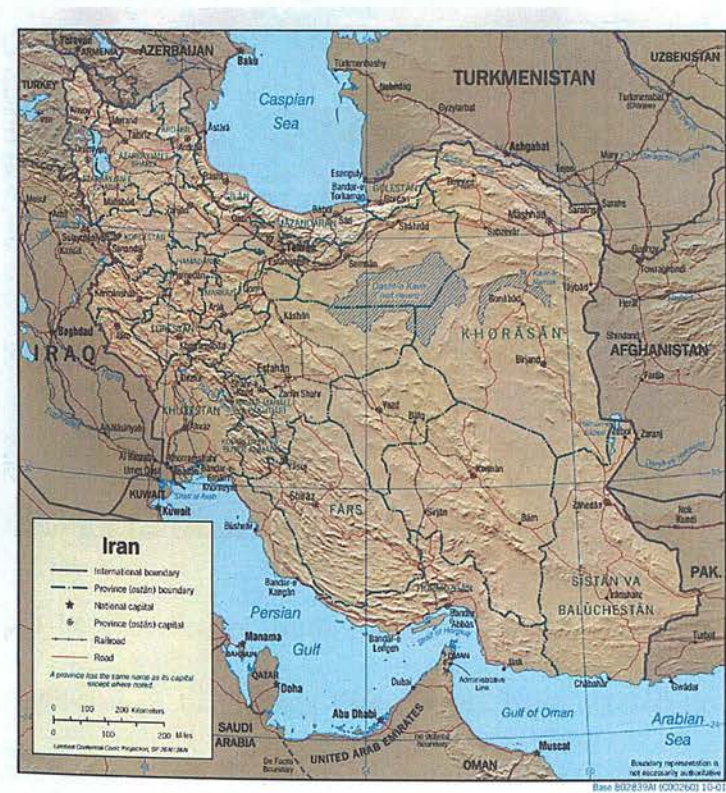


Figure 62: Provinces of Iran "Abianeh located close to Kashan"

The composition of the stones in Abianeh valley is different from its surrounding desert region. The stones are both hard and brittle, as if they have been totally shattered as a result of tectonic and "Gosali"<sup>1</sup> activities. Cliffs of stone are the natural result, and are typical of this region.

A common feature of this area of land near Abianeh is sandstone and "Shil"<sup>2</sup> which

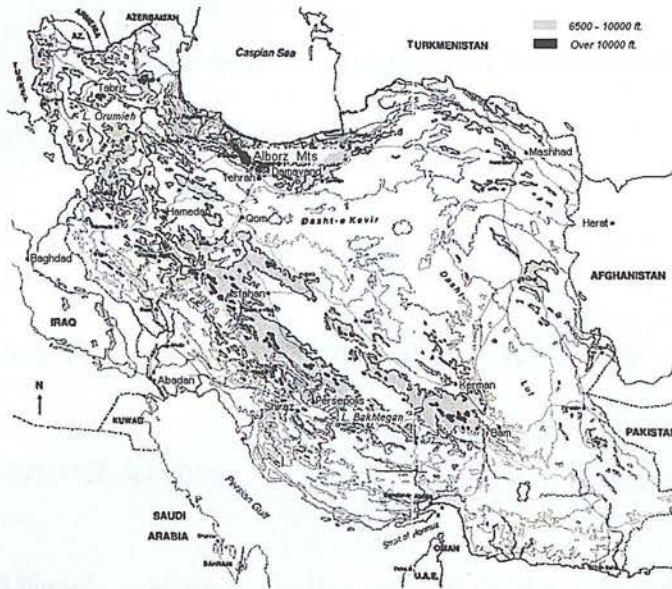


Figure 63: The contours of the highest regions

can be observed protruding from the cliffs and as cutaway layers of land. At the south-east of the village these layers have created dramatic cliffs at low level and moderate slopes. The morphology of the area indicates that there were heavy rainfalls

<sup>1</sup> Gosali: Formation of land from volcanic activity and movement of layers of earth.

<sup>2</sup> Shil: Sedimentary formation of Rocks



in this area in the distant past. Therefore, it is apparent that climactic changes along with heavy rainfall and dramatic changes in temperature have had strong influences on Abianeh's shape and general planning. The roads, paths and lanes through the settlement are strong indicators of man working hand-in-hand with nature to form a suitable natural alignment with the flow of water, sunshine, snow, frost and wind together with climatic changes which, in turn, is well integrated with the construction of the buildings and their usage. Not so far from the settlement, layers of limestone exist in great quantities and there is strain of sedimentary rocks at high level. Along the route to Kashan and Esfahan, this tends towards a harder metamorphic and igneous structure. This explains why in Abianeh there was no shortage of hard stones for the construction of foundations and walls.

### **2.3 Analysis of Villages at the Foot of Mt. Karakas**

#### **2.3.1 General Access**

On the way to Abianeh, one finds similar features in the adjoining villages. These villages are presently connected to the Kashan-Natanz route by a new asphalt road, with a modern police headquarters at its junction. The old access was located along the present road, passing through the Hanjen Bridge by the river at the rear of the Hanjen orchards while extending up to the Baqerabad fields and Yarand.

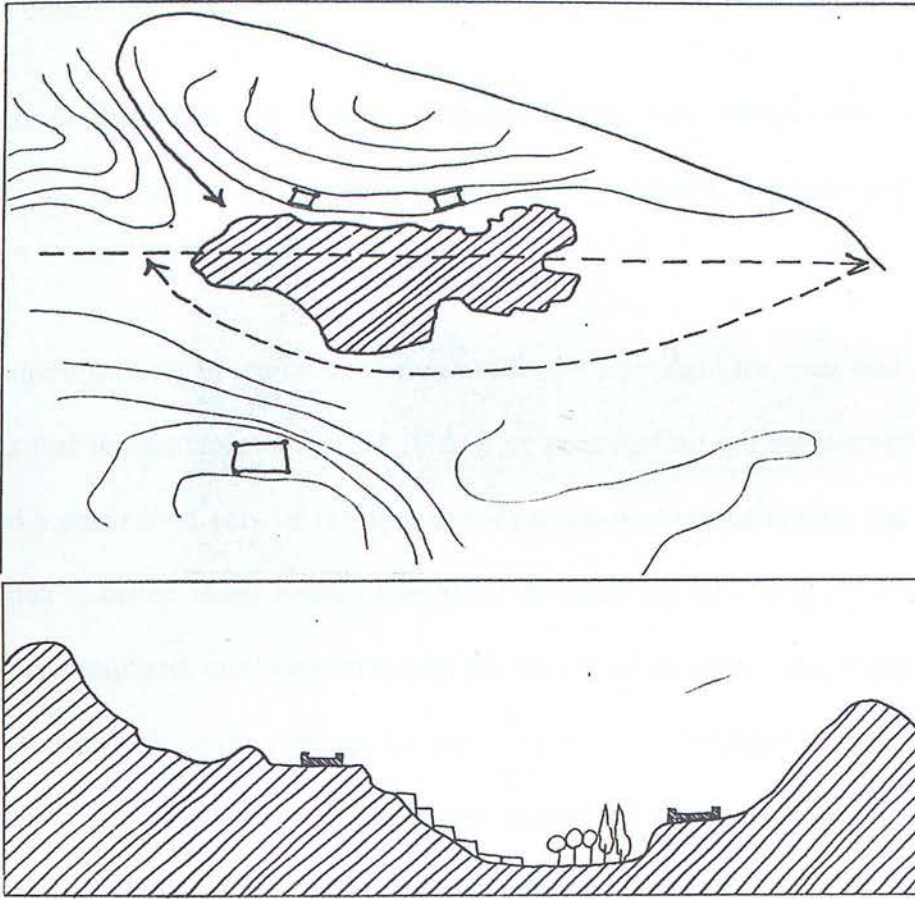


Figure 64: Contextual zoning of the settlement

Top: Plano-metric sketch of the route through the north, central through the river, and south by the fort of Palehamaneh. Below: the cross-section showing the two forts and the settlement in between and their relationship with the natural surroundings.

The road followed a route at the back of the orchards from Yarand to Komjan, and it used to go through Barz through the centre of the settlement but was destroyed by a flood. An old road extends to Tare, and Tare is connected to Abianeh by two roads. One of these was the Tare road which itself forked into two other routes: one road winded through orchards along a path where there was a dried up stream. However, the way to Kashan was along a rough path to Godare-Kashan, then to Jahaq and

Zangjan village, and Nasrabad.

To reach Esfahan, one had to pass Godare-Esfahan, Soh, Mourçe-xort and Gaz. Another way to Esfahan and Meyme was through Maravand, Çahqade and Robate-Vazvan.<sup>3</sup>

Any visitor must bear in mind that these routes were important for trade and access to products that the settlements needed. Therefore passing through the various villages provided a convenient way of refilling the water containers and resting the animals. The switch to better, faster roads came about as amenities and stopping stages were less and less required, until now that with the advent of the motor-car, stopping is no longer necessary along the route to Esfahan or Kashan. What used to take four days now takes a few hours. One observes the demise of many of these villages and caravanserais or "Stables" which benefited from the old ways.

### 2.3.2. General Structure of the Villages along the route

#### Abianeh along Mount Karkas

Hanjen valley is situated in the north-west of Iran; along the route to Abianeh some 65 kilometres long Karkas Mountain range. Hanjen village is 60 kilometres away from the city of Kashan and extends to the east of the region. This valley can be considered typical of other valleys in the Karkas mountain range. Along the valley there are a

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<sup>3</sup> The book of Gholamhosein Memoriam, Iran University of Science and Technology, Tehran, 1993, p. 311.



number of small well-developed villages in the proximity of some small fields. The villages or settlements in this valley along the route to Abianeh are: - Hanjen, Baqerabad, Komjan, Barz, and Tare. Most of these villages are located in the south of the valley except parts of Barz and Abianeh, which are in the northern section. Opposite these villages, there are rolling fields with slopes of different gradients making them look like small horizontal surfaces of green patches running along the routes beside the river. A stream flows through the middle of this valley with smaller streams trained along the upper side of the villages to naturally transport water to other parts of the villages, while taking advantage of the falls and differences in levels, a practice which has been used throughout man's history and perfected by the Romans in their aqueduct systems.



Figure 65: Regional map locating the settlement within its context

The source of this stream is in the highest mountain peaks and other streams and subterranean water channels along the valley near the village, the quality of which is said to be exceptional. (fn) However most of the stream water is used merely for irrigation purposes. These villages are built with gentle and steep slopes on the central field while in the case of each village there are various slopes, which are dealt with in different ways. Parts of Hanjen and Baqerabad villages are located in the middle of these sections. Barz and Tare were in the middle and on the horizontal level of the valley in the past. This was due to the fact that the fields in the area were not significantly good for cultivation. The general structure of the villages in Hanjen valley relies on the close connection between the mountain, orchards, water, and rural texture, and ultimately the mountain again.

### **2.3.3 The Position of Villages at the Foot of Mt. Karkas along the route to Abianeh**

It is important to note that due to vicinity and closeness of these villages there was a common need to trade and support each other. The general structure of each settlement in its essential elements was similar to each other, but not an exact replication.

Hanjen village is situated between two valleys and in a strategic area. The fort in this village is different from other local forts along the route to Abianeh and adjacent villages. In this fort, most of which is still intact, it can be seen that the residential sections of the village were made with special consideration as an integral part of the

defensive system itself. These houses are mostly three to four-story buildings.

Yarand village is located in a relatively flat area, to the south of which there is a valley, and on a higher location stands Yarand's old fort.

Komjan village is also located in a relatively flat area. Komjan fort is erected to the south of Komjan at a point overlooking the village.

Barzrood village was once along the mountainside at the centre of the valley. After the 1976 flood, the entire village was destroyed, the exception being a shrine. The old fort of Barzrood, was built on a rocky hill and has also been completely destroyed.

Similar to Hanjen but with some differences, Tare village is situated between two valleys, and its old fort is located close to a four-sectioned house known as a Chahar-Sofeh which was common to Abianeh. Like Abianeh, the northern part of this village is densely populated.

Abianeh village is located on a rather steep slope, parallel to Mt. Qale - "khat-olras", a spine straight off the mountain and leaning directly against it. The khat-olras is parallel to the valley and ultimately perpendicular to the Natanz-Kashan road. It is directly opposite Mt. Domyilan (to the south of the village) and Pale-hamoune fort. Between these two there is a rather vast and undulating piece of land consisting of "Peba" - seasonal stream, orchards.



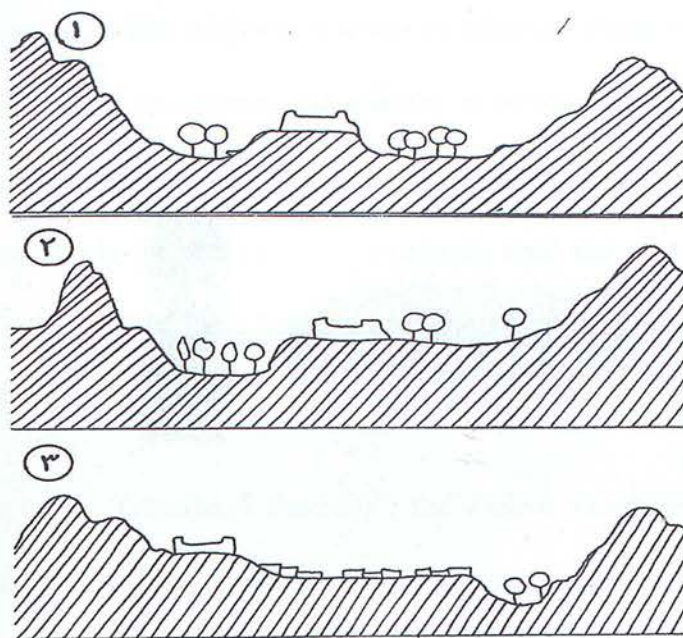


Figure 66: Contextual similarities in the adjoining settlements of Abianeh 1) Hangen Village, 2) Yarand Village, 3) Komjan Village.

### 2.3.4 Climatic Analysis of Karkas Mountains Region

The mountain range in Karkas region can be divided into three parts from the standpoint of height: The peak, the mountainside, and the valley. As a general analysis, one can conclude that there is a steady and fast current of air in the peaks and over the mountains; there is a cold wind at higher altitude all year round (cool in summer and significantly cold in winter). However, in the northern mountainside, reference should be made to the position of a few villages such as Komjan and Hanjen in the region. The situation is somewhat different from the "Ras-olkhat" of the mountains. These are generally covered with their own shade and the direct sun rarely reaches the northern mountainside during the day. The area is usually cold and chill winds are characteristic of the locality. Nevertheless, in the southern part of the



mountain, there are areas like Abianeh or a section of Barz village with good sunlight most of the year, and, on considering the amount of sunshine in the northern part, it can be considered warm and sunny. Thanks to the abundance of water and because of the fields and orchards in the area, it is also relatively cool and pleasant at the foot of the mountain. To the west of these heights, near the shrine in Abianeh to the west of the mountain, "Mt. Qale" is warmer than other parts of the mountains all year round.

Abianeh village is on "Gosalhaye harekati", the Zagros mountain range. For this reason, earthquakes have hit the area and damaged the village several times in the past. The last instance was an earthquake that registered 4.5 on the Richter scale hitting Natanz area in the autumn of 1996.

### **2.3.5 The Situation of Villages in Relation to the Environment**

As the fields occupy a relatively small portion of land in the valley, every piece of land fit for cultivation and irrigation is used for agricultural purposes so that the farmers can realize the most benefit out of the land available. The typical village itself is usually built in areas which are unfit for cultivation (unfit for cultivation from the viewpoint of it being arable land). For this reason, most of the villages are located on slopes in the mountainside where only rocks have existed. This special position of villages in the mountainside relies on the characteristics of land; That is, even the degree to which the buildings are exposed to sunlight depends heavily on the shape of land in a given area, and the inhabitants have not made arbitrary choices of place for their houses. Archetypal in its first aspirations, it was merely on the basis of elements such as sunlight that an area was chosen. All these factors have contributed to the present texture of the villages. Generally speaking, the position of the villages is

such that they are located by small fields in the middle of the valley on either side of the mountain and mostly on a slope or a high piece of land. The kind of land on which a village is built is mostly rocky, and the use of sunlight usually depends on other features.



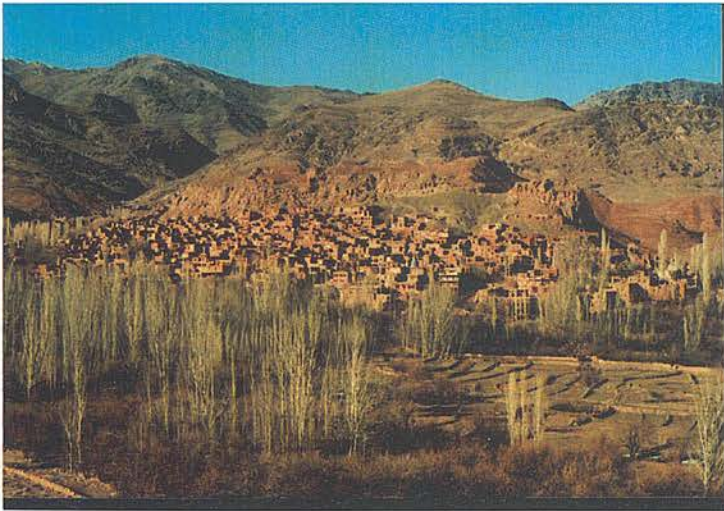
**Figure 67: Vertical paths up the mountain**

The slopes on which a village is located are of various degrees; that is, at some areas they are so steep that no building could be built, and in other locations they are so gentle that the land is almost flat. The diversity of slopes has greatly affected the form of the passageways and buildings in relation to one another. The passageways are designed as far as possible in such a way that passers-by can walk through with ease in every season, and the buildings are compatible with the passageways and slopes. It is because of these very slopes that one can find multi-story buildings, and there is a direct relationship between the floors as there are passageways at various levels.



### 2.3.6 Natural Production Potential in the Region

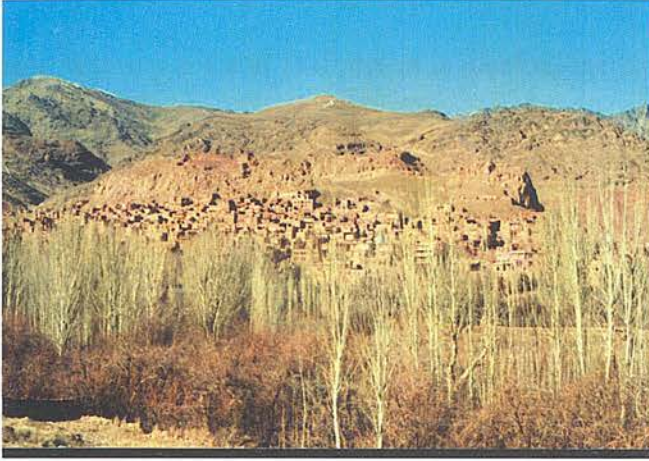
Along the valleys there are small fields through which flow brooks and streams of various sizes, taking their sources from streams in the heights. Due to the potential for cultivation in these valleys, a number of small and larger villages have come into existence. As natural potential for providing the needs of these villages is more or less the same all over this region, the materials produced by the villages are rather the same too.



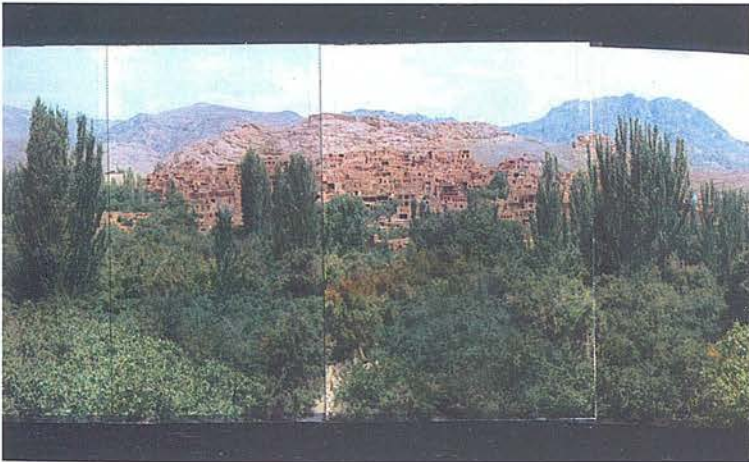
**Figure 68: Panoramic view of the settlement across the valley Late Autumn**

These small sloping fields are made into terraces and divided into smaller surfaces for agricultural purposes. Inhabitants of these villages tend to have orchards due to the scarcity of such fields. Various kinds of fruit-bearing trees and trees used for their timber are grown in the orchards. Owing to the limited space for cultivation and the suitability of certain areas for livestock, a large number of the villagers are involved in animal husbandry; as a result, animal products constitute a large portion of local produce. Animal husbandry used to be managed rather like nomadic tribesmen

roaming the hills. This meant that the locals used the pastures as summer or winter quarters depending on the season.



**Figure 69: Winter across the valley to the south**



**Figure 70: Summer across the valley to the south.**

Of course this goes back to long time ago when life followed its natural cycle in this village. Nowadays, after constant migration to the cities, such cases are no longer typical.



A general overview of the region and a geographical and climatic analysis, establishes the great climatic difference between the areas around Abianeh village, its attractive mountainside locality within the mighty Karkas Mountains and that of 30 kilometres away toward the east, where a hot and arid region is located, the climatic difference is profound.

The Grounds for the Position of Abianeh allowing for the geography of the region, the selection of Abianeh as a settlement reveals that two important matters, income and security, in addition to the climatic reasons, constitute the basis for the present form of the settlement. Although Abianeh is built upon a high location, three forts – Paeendeh or Hardeh, Barazeh or Pal, and Pelehamane – historically have been erected for the security of the inhabitants in the case of emergency. These forts were used for the protection of three districts – Paeendeh, the lower part of the settlement, Baladeh, the upper part, and Miandeh, the middle region. The position of the village is generally based on the following factors:

- a. Defence against bandits → taking refuge in the mountain → The forts
- b. Avoiding the route of spring flooding of the river
- c. Support against fast and inclement regional winds → being positioned in the mountain
- d. Exploitation of the environment for construction and the existence of hard land in the heart of the mountain, sun and water.
- e. Making the most of agricultural fields and suitable soil as well as using the seasonal river water.

2.4 Expansion of the Village

Hardeh quarter used to comprise the entire village before Islam. A portion of the southern and western part, which is now orchards, was in this quarter.

Before the Safavid period, around Miandeh and later all of Pakhounega, became parts of the village. This development extended along the main road leading to the village, that is, the direct route or "Rasta", which is in the major line of the expansion of the village.

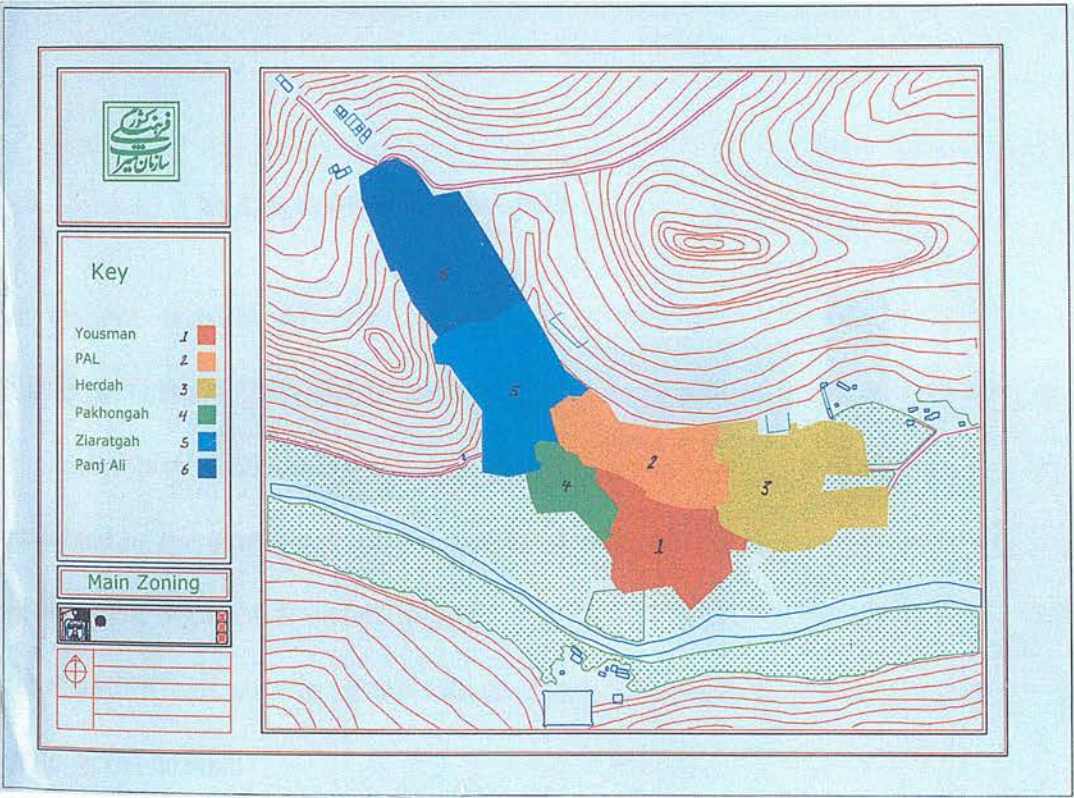


Figure 71: Drawing as part of submission on integrity of the regions

Several buildings have been constructed in certain areas of the village since the early Pahlavi period. These new buildings are in the north-west section of the village and follow a line extending to the shrine. This expansion was along Rasta alley in



the upper and lower sections. Expansion did not follow these rules during the Pahlavi period as most of the state buildings such as the schools, clinics, etc. are independent of proximity to water and being in line with the expansion of the village. However, residential buildings are still built in line with the expansion of the village (in places where there is enough space for building houses, the fields and orchards are not damaged, and the condition of the mountain permits). For this reason, most of the residential buildings, especially the newly built ones belonging to the contemporary period, are constructed along the Pal quarter toward the shrine in an area where there is a steep slope.

### 2.4.1 The Quarters in Abianeh

The ancient quarters of Abianeh consist of the three quarters named Herdeh (Paindeh), Yosman (Miandeh), and Pal (Baladeh). In the next stage (probably from the Safavid period onwards), the quarter called Paxounega (i.e. behind the mosque) was added to the south-west of Pal quarter. Later, the Ziaratgah (shrine) quarter was joined to the west of Baladeh quarter. The recent Gozare Panje-ali comprises the houses and offices section of the village. Each of the major quarters is divided into smaller areas as such:

Herdeh (Paindeh) → Miyounbarçe (i.e. vare or a lake made to block the flow of water,

Barezariat (next to the shrine),

Sarzayeh (i.e. unexpected),

Sarçheme (i.e. fountainhead or source),

Paeendarvaze (the gate to Herdeh).

Yosman (Miandeh) → Pabaqçe (i.e. behind the garden),

Miyoun-Yosmoun, and Palize.

Pal (Baladeh) → Darvazebala, Herpak (i.e. fire temple),

Ali-parine, Porzale.

Darvazebala (In the line above it is Darvazebala, but here it is Darvazeye bala). This is the border between the old and new quarters; in other words, the border between Pal and Ziaratgah quarters.





Figure 72: Zoning in Abianeh into Six regions "Drawing part of main revitalisation proposal"

The researcher has, through this 'Structural zoning' drawing, attempted to help distinguish the regions or districts in an accurate way. Six Zones in turn are subdivided in to neighbourhoods. Each neighbourhood has its own infrastructure.

## 2.5 The Proportion of Residences in Abianeh

Abianeh village has a farming texture where family groups live together. This structure sometimes creates seasonal quarters with a special occupational texture from the social point of view. For instance, in Pakhounegah and Yosman most of the people who own farms have gathered in the same place, while the inhabitants of Pal quarter, who are of an apparent lower social status compared with the aforementioned, are generally involved in animal husbandry. In this way one observes a structural social zoning within the settlement. The occupants can be divided into groups:

landlords, tenants, workers and craftsmen of different kinds who would provide the services required. The landowners formed a quarter of the dwellers, the tenants about half and a quarter roughly approximates to those workers who were respected as an integrated part of the community. Collectively, they utilized and formed a harmonious way of life. In other words, the grouping of the inhabitants themselves was based on a serious classification and was respected by all.

## Chapter Three:

# The Historical Background and Influences

Chapter Three: Historical Background and Influences

Introduction

This chapter examines the historical context and the effect of historical events on the settlement. In particular stylistic imports and the most prominent features which have stabilised themselves as recognisable elements, forms and building types are considered. The general history of Iran gives a backcloth to the events and movements in terms of architectural influences that are evident in Abianeh.

Historical Background and Influences

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### 3.1. General History

#### The Historical Background:

A brief history of Iran and the historical context of Abianeh, until the nineteenth century, illustrate the point that nothing is unique and isolated, but interrelated to a chain of complicated and meaningful changes which govern our lives.

"History is a mirror of the past and a lesson for the present." <sup>1</sup>

"There is, it seems to us, at best a limited value in the knowledge derived from experience. The knowledge imposes a pattern, and falsifies, for the pattern is new and shocking valuation of all we have been"<sup>2</sup>

The archetypal essence in life, our natural motivations and aspirations, and eventualities of life and death, together with the values we place on objects along with the derivative forms that we create as our habitation, all seem to carry a signature or an inner structure, which remains consistent and can be traced through every culture. These elements collectively form an identity, which is as strong as our names, religion, place of birth, our race and language etc. It can be considered a vertical existential life, which we carry with us until we wither away and our children and their children carry it further, and so on. History provides one such means of tracking the changes and influences on our lives today. Abianeh therefore represents a contained, well preserved settlement which tracks such changes as mentioned.

The country has always been known to its own people as Iran (land of the Aryans); although for centuries it was referred to as Persia (Pars or Fars, a province in southern Iran) by the Europeans, mainly due to the writings of Greek historians. In 1935 the Government specified that it should be called Iran. However, in 1949 both names were allowed to be used.

Most people today, know Persia or Iran through its carpets, its caviar, and its costly war with its neighbour Iraq, or through its importance as one of the world's major oil-producing nations. Yet, Persia has one of the richest and oldest cultures in the world.

For more than three thousand years Persia was a melting pot of civilizations and demographic movements between Asia and Europe. Under Cyrus the Great, it became the centre of the world's first empire. Successive invasions by the Greeks, Arabs,

Mongols and Turks developed the nation's culture through rich and diverse philosophical, artistic, scientific and religious influences. With these came about many different and interesting lifestyles and satellite settlements, this retained the origins of the Persian culture while incorporating the changes along its historical development. Such a place is Abianeh, located alongside an ancient route from the north of Iran to the south, connecting with the great civilization of the region.

Persia's first vigorous growth began in the Neolithic era, and by the third millennium B.C. it had developed into a civilization of great sophistication. The infiltration of the Aryan people into Iran during the second millennium B.C. paved that way for the Archaemenians dynasty, whose achievements were gloriously represented in the great palace buildings of Persepolis. The worshipping of the deity through the medium or symbolism of fire and locating fire temples and shrines high up in the mountains was customary to this period. Abianeh was one such place. Of its three fire temples constructed, only one has survived, and has been converted to housing and stables.



**Figure 73: The Fire Temple of Harpak, Abianeh**



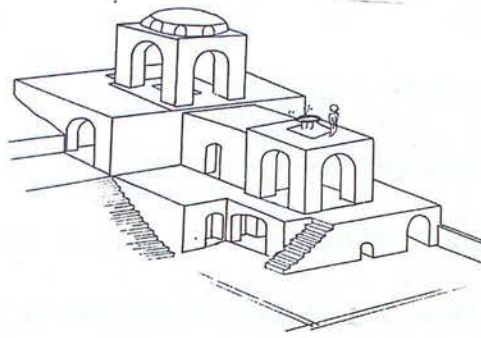


Figure 74: Sketch of the Temple as it might have been by Maxim Sero

These monuments had been built to testify to the absolute power of the Archaemenians Empire, and yet they were raised to the ground in a relatively short period by Alexander, who conquered Persia thereby initiating the Hellenistic period. This was followed in less than two hundred years by the Parthian, then the Sassanians Empires.

Map of the Middle East before Iran Existed:

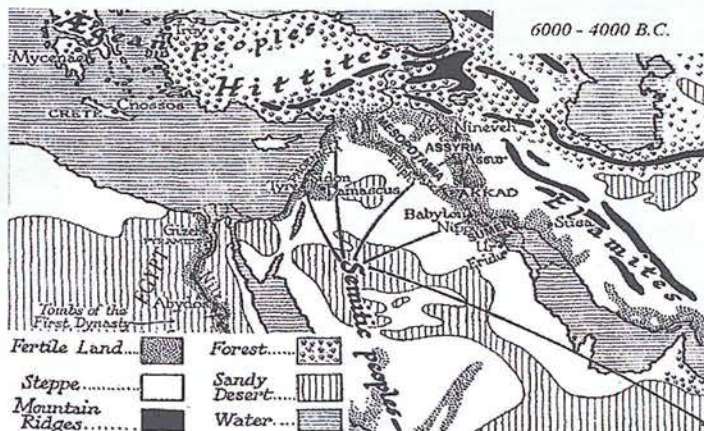


Figure 75: Hittites, Elamites "Covering Abianeh and Kashan" and Semitic people

The Elamites civilization in Iran first developed in the Susian plain, under the influence of nearby Sumerian and Mesopotamia in the Tigris-Euphrates valley. To the south of Abianeh, during this period only nomadic people would have used

this area for grazing and its water. Around 3500 B.C., animal drawn wheeled carts were in use in Sumerian. They also used ploughs to till their land, and oars to propel their ships along the Euphrates River. The Sumerians were the most advanced and complex civilization in the world at that time, and by 3100 B.C. they had invented a system of writing which was the first of its kind in the world. To this day evidence of such advanced farming tools used in Abianeh are shown in the following illustration.



Figure 76: Abianeh farming tools used and engraved on tombs

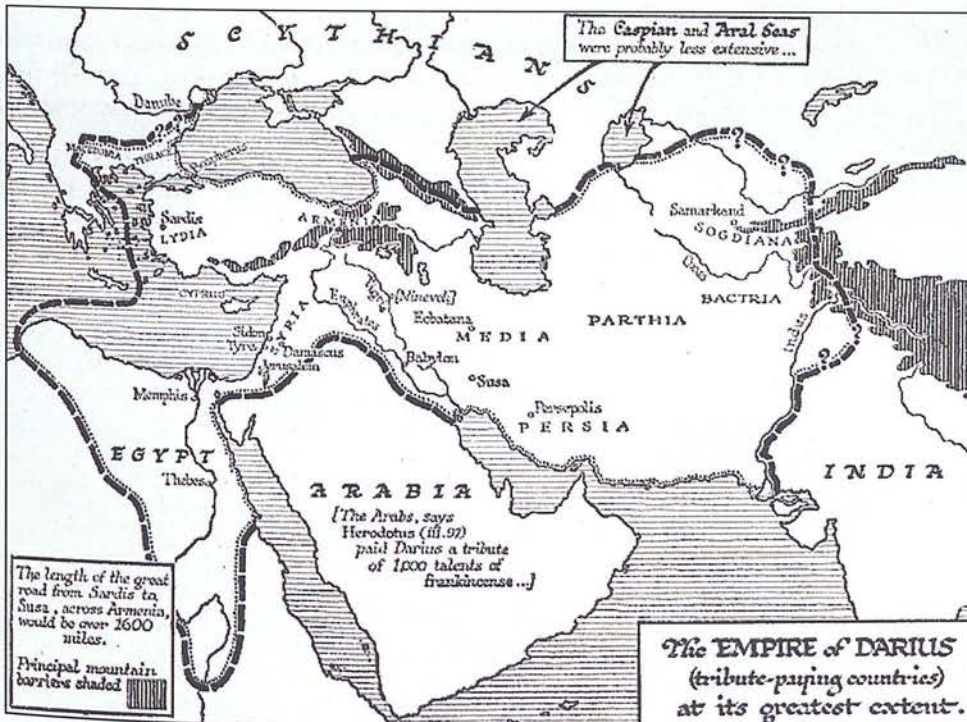


Figure 77: The Empire of Darius the Great



### 3.2. The Medes

During the second millennia B.C., successive Indo-European (Aryan) invaders broke through into the Iranian plateau, either from the Caucasus, or through Central Asia. Those who settled in Iran were divided into tribes that were distinguished from each other by their different dialects. The dialect used by Abianeh people, still accommodates words from the ancient past (Although highly diluted by the more recent Islamic and Farsi languages). The most famous of these tribes were the Persians (Parsa), and the Medes (Mada) whose linguistic relevance is discussed below. The Medes ruled over a vast empire with borders stretching from Afghanistan to Turkey.

### 3.3. The Archaemenians

The Persians achieved unity under the leadership of the Archaemenians dynasty, whose ruler Cyrus the Great brought the Archaemenians Empire onto the centre stage of world history. Cyrus was the descendant of a long line of Persian kings and, in fact, should be referred to as Cyrus II, having been named after his grandfather.



Figure 78: A view over Persepolis from the mountain Kuh-i-Rahmat

Other notable rulers who consolidated and expanded the empire were Darius The great their capital city was in the Pars region of Iran the capital" Shiraz" with Persepolis as the centre Figure 78 above.

### 3.4. Alexander the Great (The Hellenistic Period) Including the Seleucids

The Greeks under Alexander captured Babylon, Susa and then Persepolis. The splendour of Persepolis was short lived, as its palaces were looted and burned by Alexander in a single night.

The Greeks were then in possession of the ancient world from Egypt to the Indus valley, and from the River Oxus to the Danube. Alexander followed a policy of integration between the Greeks and the Persian communities, encouraging marriages and applying the formula of magnanimity and generosity, which had formerly brought success to Cyrus II.

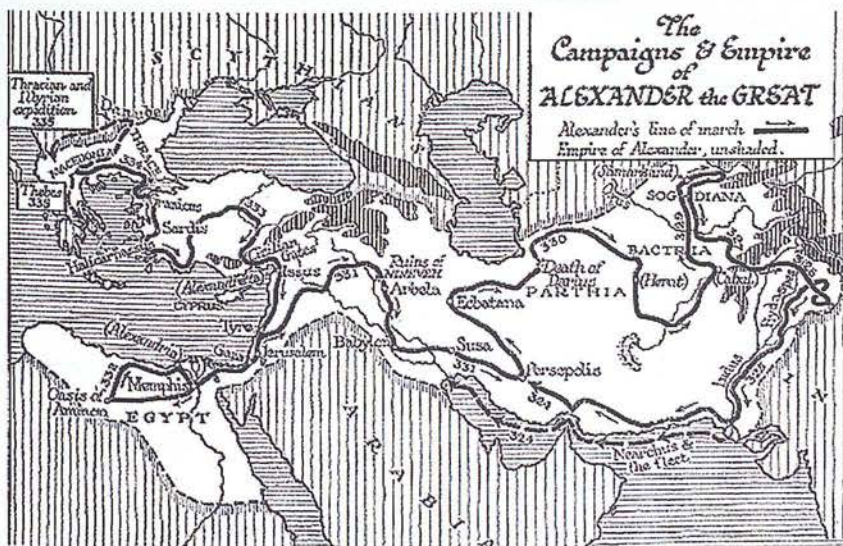


Figure 79: The Empire of the Alexander the Great



The Hellenistic period in Iran commenced in 331 B.C. and continued until circa 250 B.C.

This was the time when the Greeks tried to impose their culture on Asia. During approximately a century and a half of Greek rule in Iran, relatively little construction took place, and ruins from this period remain few and far between. During this period Abianeh was likely influenced by the principles and ideology of the Greeks. In fact the Temple of Hinza to the south side of the settlement, celebrated a type of religion that refers to the Greek gods such as Aphrodite. In later years it was named BI BI Zobeideh Khatoon.



**Figure 80: The Ziaratgah of Hinza, one of the most controversial dwellings in Abianeh which refers to life-styles well before Islam.**

In 324 B.C., having travelled down the Indus as far as its delta, Alexander after a hazardous journey returned to Babylon where he fell ill and died in 323 B.C. at the age of 32, without having nominated an heir to his empire.

Those who succeeded him, were the so-called Diadochi, who fought among themselves and after the battle of Ipsus (301 B.C.), Alexander's Empire was finally

divided into three main segments: the Ptolemaic Dynasty ruling Egypt, the Macedonian monarchy ruling Europe, and Seleucus I ruling the east including; Mesopotamia, Iran, Syria and Bactria.

The Hellenistic period in Iran began in 331 B.C. and continued until about 250 B.C. This was the time when the Greeks tried to impose their culture on Asia. Ironically, during approximately a century and a half of Greek rule in Iran, very little construction took place, and ruins from this period remain few and far between.

### 3.4.1 The Seleucids

The Seleucid capital was founded at "Antiochus" by Seleucus I. His son Antiochus, by an Iranian noblewoman, was empowered to administer the eastern provinces.

The main difficulty that the Seleucid rulers faced was how to maintain the unity of an empire composed of a mosaic of different cultures and ethnic groups, and governed by independence-minded *satraps*. A new menace was added to this, the Parthians, a nomadic people of Iranian origin who had settled in the region between the Caspian and Aral seas. In 250 B.C., Bactria proclaimed its independence, followed shortly afterwards by Parthia..

Antiochus III (223-187 B.C.) attempted to keep the empire together but in 189 B.C., the Roman army won a decisive victory against the Seleucids at the battle of Magnesia. Later, Antiochus IV (175-164 B.C.) restored his family's position in western Iran, but failed to recoup Seleucid losses in the east.

The Seleucids tried on several occasions to expel the Parthians who had moved into

northern Iran. However, the attempts of Demetrius I in 156 B.C., of Demetrius II in 141 to 140 B.C., and of Seleucus VII in 130 B.C. all failed.

### 3.4.2 The Parthian Empire

Under Mithridates I (171-138 B.C.), the Parthians continued their conquests and annexed Media, Fars, Babylonia and Assyria, thereby creating an empire that extended from the Euphrates to Herat in Afghanistan. This in effect was a restoration of the ancient Achaemenian Empire of Cyrus the Great.

In addition to the nomads that were a constant menace on its eastern frontier, the Parthians also had to face another powerful adversary, Rome. For almost three centuries, Rome and Parthia were in conflict over Syria, Mesopotamia and Armenia, without ever achieving any lasting results.

The Parthian kings referred to themselves on their coins as "Hellenophiles", but this was only true in the sense that they were anti-Roman. In reality the Parthians sought to establish themselves as the direct heirs of the Achaemenian Empire, and Mithridates II (123-87 B.C.) was the first Parthian ruler to use the old Achaemenian title "King of Kings" on his coins.





Figure 79.1: Head of a bronze statue of a Parthian prince from 1<sup>st</sup> or 2<sup>nd</sup> Century A.D.

### 3.4.3 The Sassanians or Sassanid's

In A.D. 224 Ardeshir, a descendant of Sassan and ruler of Fars and Kerman, rebelled against the Parthian king, Artabanus V, and established the Sassanian dynasty.

Within twenty years, Ardeshir I (224-241) created a vast empire that stretched as far as the Indus.

His son Shapur I (241-272) continued this expansion, conquering Bactria, and Kushan, while leading several campaigns against Rome. In 259, the Persian army defeated that of the Roman emperor Valerian at the battle of Edessa and, remarkably, more than 70,000 Roman soldiers were captured.





**Figure 79.2** A rock relief beneath the tomb of Darius at Naqsh-e Rostam, depicting the triumph of Shapur I over the Roman Emperor Valerian, and Philip the Arabian

For nearly four centuries, foreign wars and internal struggles gradually exhausted the Sassanian Empire and a new enemy, the Hephtalite Huns, defeated them. It was not until the reign of Khosroe I (531-579), one of the greatest Sassanian rulers, that the Huns were beaten and subdued.

Khosroe I took Antioch in A.D. 540, while Khosroe II, who had rebuilt the empire until it rivalled that of the Achaemenians, laid siege to Byzantium in A.D. 626. However, the dynamic emperor Heraclius 'turned the tables', with the Byzantines invading Iran in 628. Khosroe II was deposed and murdered by his followers. Following his death, over a period of 14 years and twelve successive kings, the Sassanian Empire weakened considerably, and the power of the central authority passed into the hands of the generals. This paved the way for the first Arab attacks in A.D. 633.

### 3.5. Arab Conquest: The Abbassid Caliphates

Abu Bekr, the first successor to the Prophet Mohammed, was ruler of the Moslem community from 632 to 634. He set about concluding the internal unrest between the various Arab tribes. Then Omar, caliph (successor to the Prophet and, hence, head of the Moslem community) from 634 to 644, initiated an explosive expansion of Islam. The Arab tribes seized Syria, then Jerusalem and finally.



Figure 81: The Moslem Empire

Damascus in 638 after having defeated the forces of Heraclius the Byzantine Emperor. Earlier in 635, Arab troops launched an assault on the Persian Empire, and crossed the Euphrates. The deterioration of the empire was already well underway by the time the Arab horsemen dealt the deathblow to the Sassanid dynasty and overran Persia by first entering Ctesiphon in 637. Successive victories were to follow. The Arabs emerged victorious from the engagement at Nahavand in 642, leaving the way open for them to enter the Iranian plateau. The conquest of Persia continued until the

fall of Afghanistan (651).

The Abbassid Dynasty (750-945) established its capital at Baghdad, near the old Sassanian (or Sassanid – make up your mind which is correct!) capital. For a century, the empire experienced a time of unprecedented cultural, artistic and economic development, particularly during the reigns of Harun al-Rashid (786-809) and al-Mamun (813-833). Persian scholars and artists played an important role in this intellectual activity. From the very beginning of the Abbasid Caliphate, they had been placed in charge of the highest court functions, and a large number of Iranian customs and traditions were rapidly adopted in Baghdad. The epicentre of cultural development was therefore in Baghdad at this stage and the vicinity of Abianeh was relatively remote.



### 3.6. The Islamic Influence

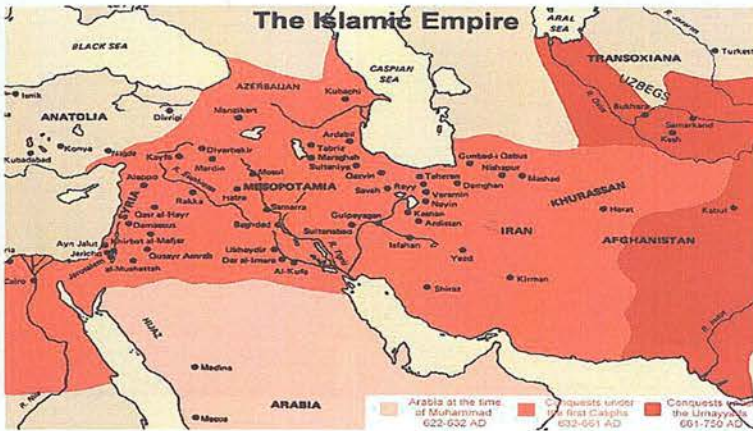


Figure 82: The expansion of Islam

The Arab conquest in the 7th century AD brought Persia into the Islamic community; however, it was in Persia that the new movement in Islamic art met its severest test. Contact with a people of high artistic achievement and ancient culture made a deep impression on the conquering Muslims.

When the Abbasids made Baghdad their capital (near the former capital of the Sassanian rulers), a vast stream of Persian influences was initiated. The caliphs accepted much of the Old Persian culture; a policy also followed at the courts of the relatively independent local principalities (The Samanids, The Buwayhids etc.), which led to a conscious revival of Persian traditions in art and literature.

As Islam coalesced in Iran, Abianeh also accepted the new way of life and amalgamated its existing beliefs in its own style. Indeed some of the most

‘Primitive’ mosques and forms of calligraphy are found in Abianeh dating to the early Islamic period.





**Figure 83: An early example of an Iranian mosque found in Abianeh – built from the most primitive building materials.**



**Figure 84: The Mehrab at the Shabestan of the Jameh Mosque in Abianeh**

Wherever possible, the cultural inheritance of Persian art was infused with new life, and customs thoroughly foreign to Islam were retained or newly introduced. Islamic art (paintings, metalwork etc.) was heavily influenced by Sassanian methods and Persian vaulting techniques were adopted in Islamic architecture. Few secular buildings of the early period have survived, but judging from the remains it is probable that they retained many features of the Sassanian palaces, such as the

"domed audience chamber" and "the ground plan arranged around a central court", as demonstrated in Chapter 5.

A major change that this period brought to the development of art was to restrict the depiction of lifelike portraits, or true-life representations of historical people and events.

"On Resurrection Day, God will consider image-makers as the men most deserving of punishment"

More tolerant Muslim believers were less stringent of the portrayal of figurative art. Consequently in bathing houses, paintings of hunting or love scenes for the entertainment of the patrons seldom aroused objection. However, in religious establishments, only indistinct hints of human or animal forms were tolerated.



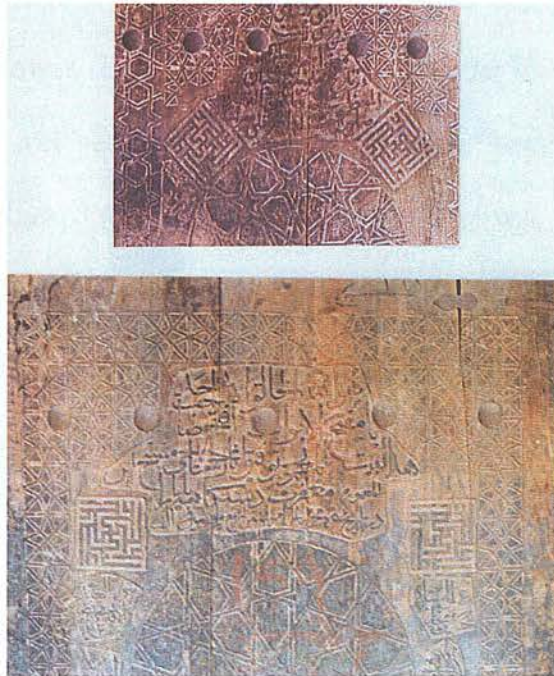
Figure 85: Islamic Art and Calligraphy

Calligraphy is the highest art form of Islamic civilization, and, like all forms of art that came into contact with Iran, the Persians enhanced and developed it. Ta'liq, "hanging script" (and its derivative Nasta'liq) was formalised in the 13th century AD; although it had been in existence for centuries prior to then. It is claimed to be derived



from the old pre-Islamic Sassanian script. The written page was also enriched by the art of the "Illuminator" and in some manuscripts by that of the painter, who added small-scale illustrations.

"In the name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate"; - almost every Sura (chapter) in the Koran begins with this phrase, known as the 'bismillah' ('in the name of God') from its opening three words. In the figures below the Sura has been executed by skilled Korana hands: (left from top) early Kufic, square Kufic, eastern Kufic, Thuluth; (right from top) Naskhi, Muhaqqaq, Rihani, Ta'liq.



**Figure 86: Islamic decoration and calligraphy on doors to houses in Abianeh**

The tenacity of Persia's cultural tradition is such that, in spite of centuries of invasions and foreign rule by Arabs, Turks, Mongols, Afghans, etc., her art reveals a continuous development, while retaining its own identity. During Arab rule, the adherence of the local population to the Shi'ite sect of Islam, (which was opposed to rigid orthodox

observance), played an important role in their resistance to Arab ideas. By the time orthodoxy gained a foothold, through conquest by the Seljuk's in the 11th century, the Persian element had become so deeply entrenched that it could no longer be uprooted, - such as the commemoration of Ashurah<sup>3</sup> which is described below.

### 3.7. The Safavid Period

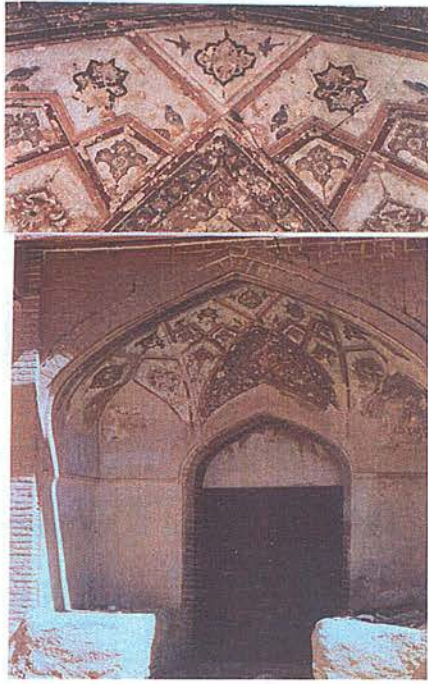
During the same period as the Mongols and the Timurids, north-western Iran went through a different historical development. It was here that Turcoman groups fought with each other for power. The Turcoman Dynasty of the Kara-Koyunlu, or "Black Sheep" (1275-1468) was set up at Tabriz, and it was later replaced by the Ak-Koyunlu, or "White Sheep" (1434-1514). However, there was a third dynasty, called the Safavid (1502-1737), that emerged in Azerbaijan, and had as its leader Shah Ismail (1487-1524). He successfully conquered a vast territory which extended from Herat (Afghanistan) to Baghdad (Iraq).

The Safavid dynasty takes its name from Sheikh Safi-od-Din of Ardabil, who was the ancestor of the Safavid kings and spiritual leader of the Safavid Sufi order, founded in 1301. Of all the historical events and changes Abianeh has been most influenced by this period, largely due to its attraction for the kings as a hunting ground and a place for leisure and meditation. In later chapters these influences will be more carefully considered.

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<sup>3</sup> The tenth day of the month of Moharam





**Figure 87: Entrance to a house in the Khanegah area of Abianeh decorated after the Safavid style of fresco and figurative paintings (by Reza Abbasi or his students).**

The Safavid were successful in bringing the whole of the Iranian plateau under unified control, and they made Iran a "national state" in the modern sense of the word. The height of Safavid glory was at the time of the reign of Shah Abbas I (1571-1629), who encouraged contact and trade with Europe. Eclectic artistic influences from Europe were also imported at this period, such as the classical orders in architecture and different styles of painting and, especially, religious frescoes evident in the Christian churches of Isfahan. These helped transform the new capital, Isfahan, into one of the most magnificent cities of Persia. The presence at the Safavid court of foreign envoys and the growing number of merchants and travellers to Iran were later to have a great influence on the arts and literature of Europe.



**Figure 88: Detail of a silk carpet from the Safavid period**

The cultural growth was accompanied by considerable development in all forms of art and crafts. The Persian carpet, for example was at its finest during the Safavid era. Miniature paintings, Chinese and Arabic designs had an important influence in carpet motifs, and carpets became a major Persian export to Europe, India, and even the Ottoman Empire.

The Safavids adopted Shi'ism as their state religion, which in turn had an important role in unifying the Persians against the strict Sunni Ottoman Empire. Following the collapse of the Safavid dynasty, there ensued half a century of civil war in Iran between the rival Zand and Qajar factions. Finally in 1795 the Qajar leader Agha Muhammed Khan, emerged victorious and established the new Qajar dynasty. He brought the whole country under his authority and was crowned "Shah" (king) in Tehran in 1796.

The nineteenth and early twentieth centuries were dominated by a growing conflict of interest between the great imperial powers, Russia and Great Britain. This led to the formation of the first "Majlis" (parliament) in 1906.

### 3.8. Zand and Qajar Periods; Part 1 (1750-1925)

The Qajar dynasty, which ruled Persia from 1795 to 1925, was not a direct continuation of the Safavid period. The invasion of the Ghilzai Afghan tribes with the occupation in 1722 of the Safavid capital Isfahan, followed by the eventual collapse of the Safavid Empire in the following decade plunged Iran into a period of political chaos. With the exception of the Zand interval (1750-79), the history of eighteenth century Iran was marred by tribal violence. This ended with the coronation of Aqa Muhammad Khan Qajar in 1796, which ushered in a period of political stability that was characterised by a revival of cultural and artistic life. The evolution of Persian art in the 18th and 19th centuries can be divided into distinct phases, beginning with the reign of Karim Khan Zand (1750-79), Fath Ali Shah (1797-1834) and Nasir ad-Din Shah (1848-96).

During the Zand period, Shiraz replaced Isfahan not only as the capital but also as the centre of artistic excellence in Iran, and Karim Khan's building program in the city attempted to emulate Shah Abbas' Isfahan. Shiraz was endowed with fortifications, palaces, mosques and other civil amenities.



Figure 89: The Pavilion at Pars Museum. (Zand era)





Figure 90: The Vakil Bazaar, Shiraz. (Zand era)

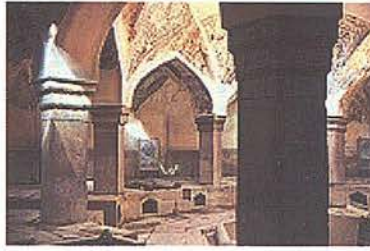


Figure 91: Hamam Vakil, public bath, Shiraz. (Zand era)

A much more simplified version of this bath exists in Abianeh and it is still in use today.

Zand artists were as versatile as their predecessors. As well as developing life-sized paintings (murals and oils on canvas), manuscripts, illustrations, watercolours, lacquer work, and enamels from the Safavid dynasty, they added a new medium, that of wash drawing. However, in their paintings, the results often appeared to be rigid, since the Zand artists in order to correct what they considered an excessive emphasis on three-dimensionality, attempted to lighten the composition by the introduction of decorative elements. Sometimes pearls and various jewels were painted on the headgear and clothing of the subjects. In Abianeh such paintings existed as frescos, until recent years, in the prominent houses along the main route through the settlement.

Portraits of princes and historical scenes were used to adorn the new palaces and they were often shaped like an arch in order to fit into a space in the same shape on a



wall. Fath Ali Shah also distributed several paintings to foreign powers such as Russia, Britain, France and the Austro-Hungarian Empire. Consequently a link between cultures was established.



**Figure 92: Qajar prince and his attendant. Tehran c. 1820. Designed to fit into arches in the diwan or public room of a house or palace.**

The interaction of popular style and European influence is even more evident in painting, with Flemish and Florentine elements appearing in the painting of the dancer "Mazda" by Madhi Shirazi (1819-20).

With the introduction of printing and large scale painting some of the finest Qajar miniature artists turned their hand to lacquer work associated with book bindings, caskets, and pen boxes (qalamdan). The style is cosmopolitan and characteristic of a court that attempted to combine the artistic influences of Persepolis, Isfahan and Versailles.



**Figure 93: Casket with image of Fath Ali Shah hunting with a prince and courtiers. Early 19th century, artist unknown.**

In the second half of the 19th century Nasir al Din Shah, as well as collecting European artwork, supported a local school of portraiture which abandoned the style of Fath Ali Shah in favour of a European-influenced academic style. The works of these local artists ranged from state oil portraits to watercolours of unprecedented naturalism. The most important artist of the late Qajar period was Muhammad Ghaffari, known as Kamal al-Mulk (1852-1940) who championed a new naturalistic style.



**Figure 94: "Exorcist and clients", by Kamal al-Mulk, or his circle. Tehran c. 1900**





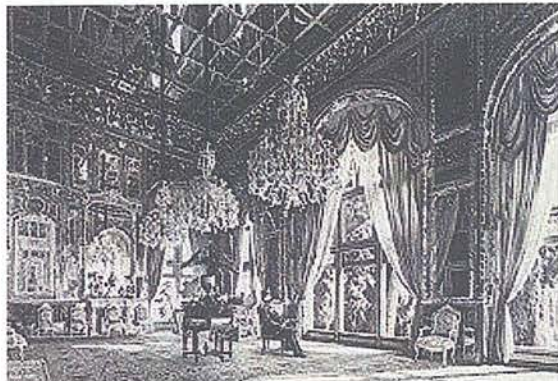
**Figure 95: Simnan City Gate c. 1884 cuerda seca tiles showing Persian soldier on guard in European style uniforms, which were introduced to the Persian army by Muhammad Shah (1834-48).**

The Qajar technique par excellence - again triggered by European influence, in this case Venetian glass- was mirror-work. Mugarnes cells faced with mirrors yielded an original and spectacular effect, as can be seen in the Golestan palace in Tehran or the Hall of Mirrors in Mashad's Holy Shrine. At a more modest scale, several of the houses in Abianeh have adopted this technique of interior decoration.



**Figure 96: The ceiling of Zinatolmolk Residence, Shiraz (Qajar era)**

**Figure 97: Painting by Kamal al-Mulk showing the Hall of Mirrors, Golestan Palace Tehran, 1888.**



In the field of applied arts, only weaving continued to have an importance that

consistently extended beyond the borders of Iran, and during the Qajar period, the carpet industry gradually revived on a larger scale. In Abianeh this was one of the main sources of income.

Although many traditional designs were retained, they were expressed in different ways, often smaller in scale than their Safavid prototypes, with the use of a brighter range of colours.



Figure 98: Detail of a magnificent 19th century Kerman Ravar carpet (Qajar era).

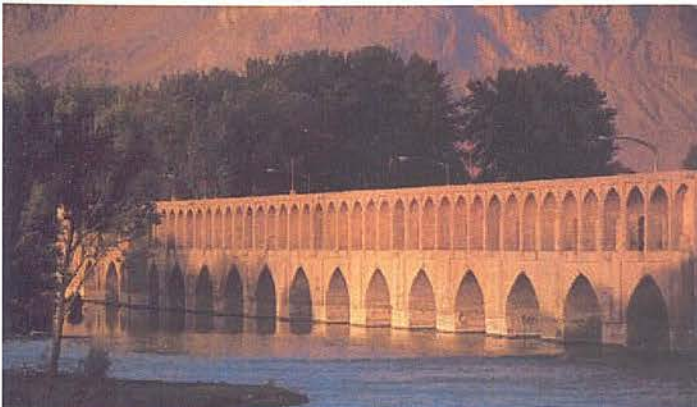


Figure 99: Si-o-se-pol or "Allah-verdi Khan Bridge", built in 1632 by Shah Abbas II over the Zayandeh Rud (river), Isfahan



### Historical Cities of Iran - "Isfahan"

The vast province of Isfahan is located almost in the centre of Iran between Tehran and Fars. Although it is mostly arid, there are several high mountains (Mount Karkas at 3899 metres above sea level) and rivers such as the Zealander Rud (1) that dominate its landscape. A large population lives in the numerous oases that mark the old caravan routes, which linked not only the northwest and southwest of Iran, but crossed the mountain ranges to the south, towards Shiraz and onward to the ports on the Persian Gulf.



Figure 100: "Aerial view of Imam Square", Isfahan



Figure 101: A view of Damavand, the highest peak of the Alborz Mountain range, from the north of Tehran (Photo by N. Kasraian)

Tehran or Tehran = "Iran's Capital City"

Tehran became a capital in 1789, under Qajar rule, replacing Shiraz as the major administrative city. Seven years later in 1796, Aqa Muhammad Khan was enthroned there. His successor, Fath Ali Shah (1797-1834) continued the transformation of the town and had the Shah's Mosque (now the Imam Khomeini Mosque) and the Golestan Palace built, while Nasir ad-Din Shah (1848-96) enlarged the walls and commissioned the Sepahsalar Mosque.

During the 19th century, the centre of the city remained focused around the palace and the bazaar. However, Reza Shah (1925-1941) preferred to live in his palaces to the west of the city or in those at Sa'ad Abad, ten kilometres to the north. Consequently large avenues were cut to link these areas together during his reign. This was the beginning of the vertical north-south axis, which is so characteristic of Tehran.





### Figure 102: Provinces and Capitals of Iran



Figure 103

The History of Iran is a colourful but bloody one.



Figure 104: Parsi Woman, circa 1864



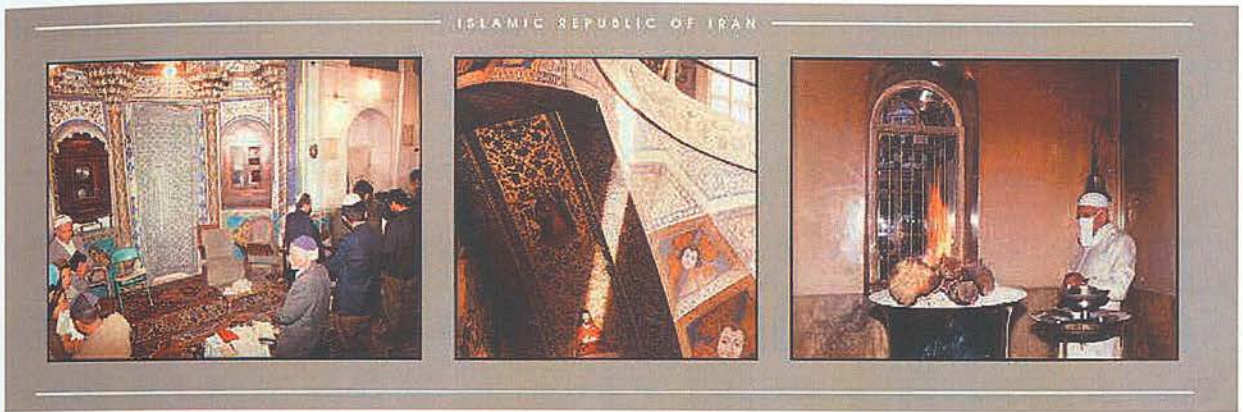


Figure 105: Scenes of religious minorities currently accepted by Islam in Iran: A Jewish religious ritual / Tha Vank Church / a Zoroastrian ritual of worshiping through the medium of fire

### 3.9. A Glance at the History of Abianeh (The microcosm):

In prehistoric times where there are deserts today, there was a vast expanse of sea that gradually reduced and dried up over millennia. Today its legacy is in the forms of lakes and salt marshes. It is believed that pastures and plains located today at the mouth of valleys covered the area at the edge of the desert in a period when the water table and precipitation of the plateau was more than today; thus, the area was suitable for pastoral life. Stone Age people, who lived in caves and hunted animals in the valleys, moved down and settled in the pastures, forming the foundations of living in villages as settlements, the ancestors of modern man, arrived about four to five thousand years BC. Priorities in these ancient times concerned sourcing suitable water and land, raising live-stock, and keeping safe a family. Travelling the area of what we regard as Iran today would have taken months if not years.

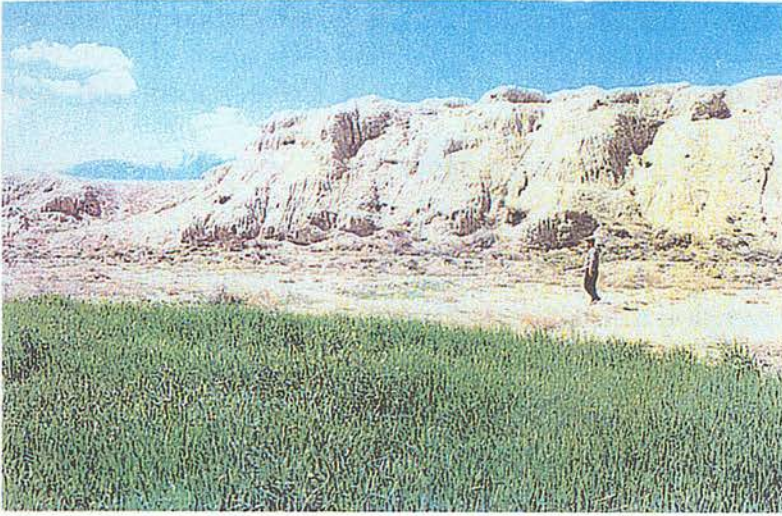
The remains of these ancient settlements can still be found on the margins of the present routes, villages and towns today, thus revealing that major routes have not changed much since ancient times. Excavations of ancient sites such as the

Syialk Hills near Kâšân (Kashan City) and others typically found by main roads and byroads near contemporary cities and villages indicate that many of these settlements were once substantial villages, towns and cities dating back to thousands of years before the birth of Christ. These places did not belong to groups of people leading a secluded life. Similarities between the works of art excavated in these sites show that these villages were connected to each other by special routes. As caravans likely travelled through these routes, they would have carried merchandise from one place to another, including works of art which would influence those of other areas. During the excavations of the Syialk Hills, various objects such as shellfish, carnelian, turquoise, and rings of crystal and lapis lazuli were excavated. It may be inferred that these objects were brought from distant places in Egypt and China along the great silk route to Kashan. It is also worth noting that engraved seals for large earthenware jar that stored treasure or merchandise were discovered. Such evidence indicates that there was a flourishing trade in these places.<sup>4</sup> As for Abianeh, an ancient settlement, there are no written documents to determine its early antiquity. The age of the settlement can only be estimated or guessed through inference based on certain signs, such as dwellings and remains of pottery, social behaviour and rituals.

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<sup>4</sup> Mohammadkarim Pirnia and Karamatollah Afsar, the Cultural Heritage Organization of the Islamic Republic of Iran, Armin Publications, Tehran, 1991, pp. 18-19.





**Figure 106: Syialk Hills Kashan city 25KM from Abianeh.**

To the east of the village of Abianeh by a passage leading to the lower gate, there is a hill of soil and clay on which there are signs of an ancient fort. This fort is called Nezâtoun or Dezâtoun, and it may have been used as a residence. The discovery of numerous broken pieces of unglazed earthenware in the vicinity the fort, including the orchards around it, is indicative of a strong possibility that there was a kiln in the vicinity. If indeed this were the case, then civilized people lived here in the past.

The Syialk civilization by the Fiyn stream in Kâšân, dates back to 5,000-6000 years ago.<sup>5</sup> Excavations carried out at this site in 1933 and 1934 have shown that Syialk has been destroyed and subsequently renovated a number of times.

With population growth, it is possible that the Syialk people split into smaller factions that dispersed and settled towards the south of the Zagros Mountains. Abianeh may have come into existence as a result of one these dispersed groups of people. The

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<sup>5</sup> Roman Grishman translated by Dr. Isa Behnam, Scientific-Cultural Publications Company, Tehran, 1998, p. 19.

resemblance between the pottery found in Abianeh and that excavated at the Syialk Hills strengthens this theory; while the proximity of Abianeh to Kâšân further intensifies this speculation. The decision to settle in the sandy hillsides around the site of the Nezâtoun fort with its gentle topography and access to water led to the making of a fort or a pottery workshop in the vicinity. Because this site is archaeologically the most ancient in the locality, it would be reasonable to suggest that the first migrants settled there.

Through time natural disasters occur. In Abianeh there was an inclination to build houses in the west.\* Records refer to two strong earthquakes in 1713 and 1714 in Esfahan and Kâšân respectively, devastating these cities and their suburbs.<sup>6</sup> At Abianeh the 1956 earthquake tore off rocks from the sides of the mountain inflicting terrible destruction. The area in the lower section of the settlement had been proved unreliable for habitation ever since. For this reason, people commenced building houses along the stream leading to the upper gate, i.e. the place known as the shrine, thus forming the present limits of the village; that is, from the upper gate to "omoomi mostaghimi" (Main public route or alley to the lower gate).. This main route from the upper gate to the great mosque divides the village into the southern and northern parts.

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<sup>6</sup> Seid Abdolhosein Khatoonabadi, Annual reports from the beginning of Creation to 1916 edited by Mohammadbagher Behboodi, Eslamieh, Tehran, 1973, p. 574.



### 3.10. The Impact of Historical Events on Abianeh

People sought and constructed forms of shelter in the heights overlooking the then existing residential area when they were under attack or exposed to unstable political developments in the region. During periods of stability they designed and decorated their homes while allowing expression through a combination of craft based and artistic talents.

In this way Abianeh has developed partly in isolation, partly in response to the world about.

Houses are generally built with local materials. The foundations of the walls are constructed from stone to such a height as to be safe from the winter snows while the superstructure is made predominantly from bricks. The main material used in the houses is wood and a red soil\* which is common to this region. The significance of this soil is that the more it is exposed to rainwater, then the more impenetrable the mortar becomes. This 'magical soil' which gives the village its charming quality, covers the buildings exquisitely as a water resistant building material. Before examining building works of the more recent eras – i.e. from primarily the 8th century AH, older historical buildings, the dates of which can merely be estimated, are examined. When M. Siroux the famous scholar, returned to Abianeh in 1960 after a prolonged absence, he wrote:

"This wonderful valley fills the mind with a lively and refreshing memory, such that when I returned after 26 years, I found the place exactly like what I remembered. The traveller is free from stress from that spot. The traveller may travel for 25 kilometres on a mule wobbling at every jolt on rocks, or he may travel on foot if he wishes; at any rate, as soon as he leaves

behind the un-trodden path and reaches his destination the only thing which would remain in his memory shall be the sweet taste of orchards and their wonderful shades spreading over the land."

Although the villages in the district, inclusive of Abianeh, have undergone great changes, the Iranian forms\* of the pre-Islamic period are still preserved in them. The houses are painted ochre and are situated on the lower slopes of the valley. (The bottom of the valley is still used for farming.) These houses are built on different levels, sometimes up to four. Several rooms, mostly with protruding wooden balconies, overlook the orchards. Colourful flowers beautifully decorate the façades of buildings. Entrance doors that are usually open while facing high and low alleys signify a life not confined within closed doors. The inhabitants are expert farmers who sell well-known fruits. They also profit from selling numerous domestic animals that are kept in underground pens during winter and taken to nearby and distant markets in the central\* (markazi) region during the Spring months.

Except for a few exceptions, the people in this valley were entirely Zoroastrian in their beliefs, until the reign of Shah Esmaeel (1502 - 1524 AD). Being head of the Shiite sect, this king did not tolerate 'dissenters' and believers in the old faith were forced either to become Shiites or to migrate to other places to save their lives. Some joined fellow-Zoroastrians in Yazd and the rest, that is, the majority, migrated to India, where their principle settlement was at Bombay. In contemporary times, it is known that the affluent descendents of these people frequently come to this place to pay homage to their ancestors, but they do not stay. Migrant Iranians still follow their ancient traditions; they go straight to the shrine without even asking the way. Lifestyle, gardening, and women's garments have not changed much since



olden times. The language of the locals is an old dialect which is not well understood by speakers of modern Farsi. There are certainly various cases for advanced linguistic studies here. (1) It is recommended by the writer that further studies should be made in this field in order to further record and develop our understanding of the Abianeh people. The impact of historical changes in Abianeh, as demonstrated by the writer, has been a major factor in all their stylistic discourse and life-styles in all shapes and forms. This is examined in each subsequent chapter. Specific references are made to the existing conditions.

### 3.11. The Fire Temple

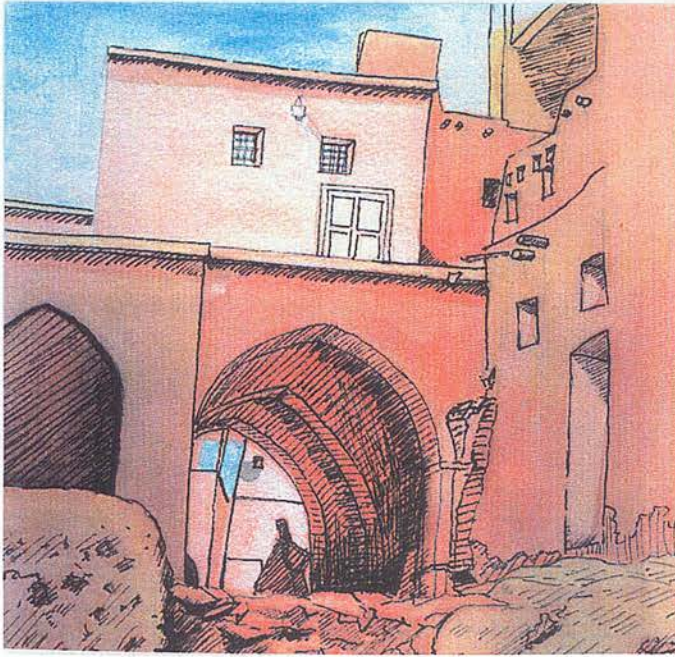


Figure 107: The fire temple of Hinza at the heart of the settlement, water colour painting by the writer. Building first recorded by M. Siroux.

The oldest significant monument in Abianeh is the Harpak or Fire Temple: (her = under, and pak = stairs → under the stairs). There is a sâbât or canopy, a pendentive structure which is different from the rest of the construction. The difference lies in

the point that the northern wall has a ghorfei mahazi va gharineh, or central space with a specific symmetry and regularity, which by two stairways leads to a private house and a small room built over a straight barrel vault. Harpak takes its name from these very stairways. The difference in the structure of the monument (it is covered with a straight barrel vault and 'lasheh' or stone and gypsum from the foundation to the roof) has lead archaeologists to the conclusion that this must have been part of an old temple. It is highly probable that it was a fire temple which had other constituent parts which have perished. Professor Maxim Siroux has drawn a sketch to illustrate the hypothetical structure of the temple as it may have existed centuries ago.

Its proximity to privately owned buildings which were well maintained, has ensured that this monument survives today with its two square domes (Chahar Taghi).

### 3.12. The Forts

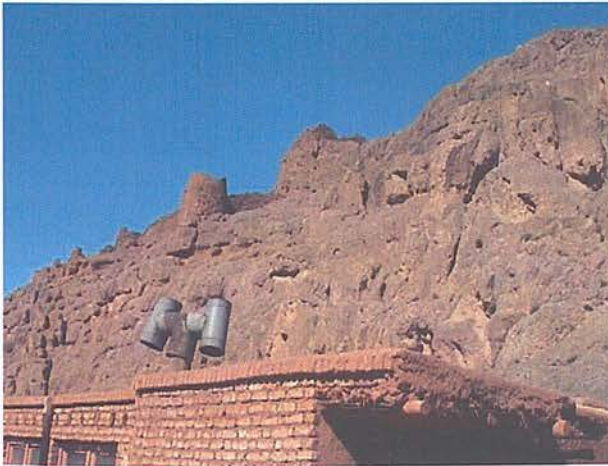
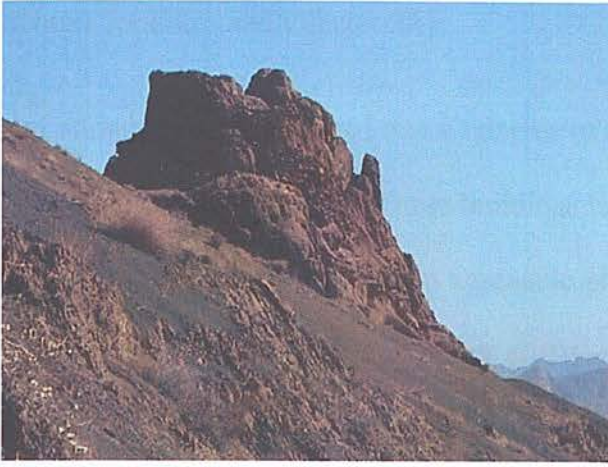
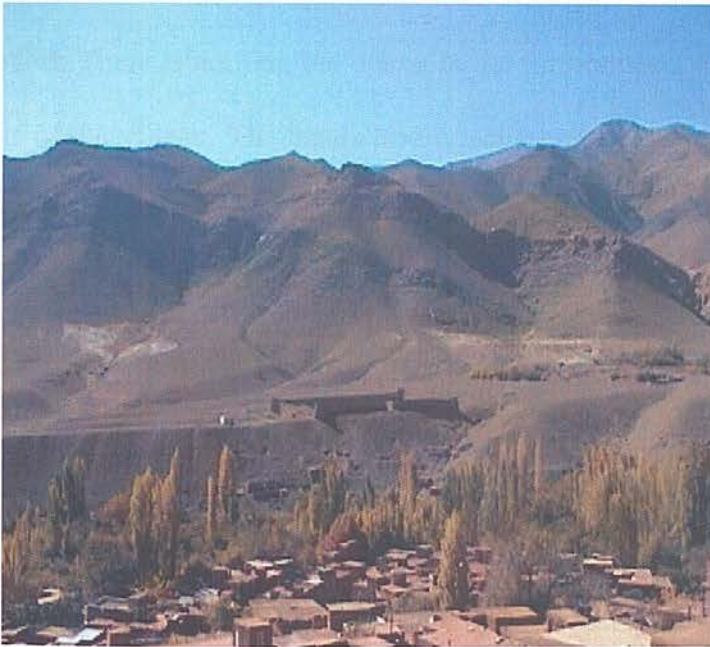


Figure 108: The fort of Bala deh





**Figure 109: The fort of Mian deh**



**Figure 110: The fort of paeen deh or palehamaneh**

The military history of Iran covers thousands of years, and throughout these millennia Iranians constructed defensive structures throughout the country as part of national and local precautionary measures to defend themselves against enemies while maintaining a sense of national integrity. These early defensive structures comprised: walls, gates, and ditches; caves and rock fortresses similar to caves; mountain forts;

defensive walled structures for cities and villages. (1)

The topography around Abianeh has determined that a number of mountain forts have been constructed there during different periods. These buildings have been erected on the principle of suitability of place and structure. An agreeable place might be found in the natural shape of a piece of lowland and a nearby cliff-face relatively hard to reach. A suitable structure was one that could ward off fierce attacks and long periods of siege.

With regard to the remains of Dezâtoun Fort today, there is little sign of a fort or walls at the site of the fort. There is nothing but debris in the furthest corner of Abianeh beyond the limits of the village. The locals traditionally believe there are treasures in the hill where there was once a fort. An examination of the pottery found on the hill reveals that the fort must belong to an early Islamic period and was constructed of mud, bricks and timber. Destruction may have been initiated by the climatic changes and floods in that region.

In fact, there were forts located in each of the major quarters in Abianeh – i.e. Pâindeh (the lower village), Miândeḥ (the middle village), and Bâlâdeḥ (the upper village) – and all overlooked their associated areas. Built out of a rock face, Pâindeh Fort may be the oldest. The only practical way to the fort is through the entrance.

With the expansion of the village, Bâlâdeḥ Fort was erected atop a mountain of rock overlooking the settlement. Miândeḥ Fort, apparently the most recent of the three,

was erected on the southern side of the same mountain. Excavations of the site revealed this fort was in fact a renovation of an older structure. (2)

### 3.13. The Baths

There are two public baths, or Garmâ:ve (or Garmâbe). One is located in Pâindeh principally for the people living in that quarter, while the other is in Yosmân and is mainly used by the residents of Pal and Yosmân. The bathhouse is important from the context of size and structure. Interestingly, there is no such bathhouse even in the adjacent Natanz area. The straight barrel vaulted stone roof in the courtyard is supported by four octagonal carved stone columns. Supplying and installing such stones to this place is an extraordinary task on such rough land where even a mule can move only with difficulty. (It was not possible to take any interior photographs due to the wet and steam atmospheres in the Bineh and Sarbineh bathhouses). The bathhouse is associated strongly with the Safavid and Qajar dynasties. However the origins of such baths go back to the ancient Greek and Roman periods. Later adopted extensively by the Turks the building type, within Iran, is known as the Turkish bath today.

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<sup>2</sup> Zeinolabedin Khansari Abianeh, Abianeh and the Culture of its People, Ganjineh-ye Honar, Tehran, 1999, pp.64 - 65.



### 3.14. The Mill

In the village, there are three water mills (âsiyâb) which are built alongside the stream. One of them is still working. (1) This type of mill is an imported technology from the Safavid period. It helped with the mechanisation of the flower industry and the expansion to a wider market.



Figure 111: The mill to the west of the settlement

### 3.15. Saljuk Buildings

The Saljuk dynasty is a great phenomenon in the history of Iran. The Turkish dynasty not only dominated a vast area of the Islamic world but also had a significant role in the spread of Persian literature and culture as a whole. The Saljouqi sultans' lack of a refined culture was no obstacle to the country's political and social development since their internal affairs of the country were controlled by trusted Iranian advisors and ministers. These hitherto barbaric warriors could not accomplish basic diplomacy

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even in military affairs. Furthermore, Sultan Mahmood Qaznavi's tradition of gathering scholars, men of literature, and scientists at court was still practised, so Iranian writers and scholars were also present at the Saljuk court, to such an extent that Farsi, not Turkish, became the country's formal language and was used in formal correspondence (something unprecedented in the reign of Sultan Mahmood). However in successive decades, the Turkish language and expressions gradually weakened the dominance of Farsi.

The Saljuk dynasty dominated mainly the west of Iran, Syria, Asia Minor, and Caucasia, while the Qaznavis made efforts to dominate Moltan, Punjab, and Sindh and spread Farsi and Persian culture among the higher levels of society under their control.<sup>7</sup> In the history of Iran after Islam, the Saljuk dynasty was the largest and strongest government that came to power and the country was ruled strongly and competently. The brightest period of their reign was the time when they ruled over an area from Kashmir to Antakieh (Antioch). The capital of the country during the reign of one of the most powerful Saljuk kings, Malek Shah, and his shrewd minister Khajeh Nezamolmolk was Esfahan (Isfahan). With the help of his consultants and colleagues, Nezamolmolk attempted to establish an efficient administrative system in the government while improving the social and economic situation of the country. Typical settlements like Abianeh and how the growth of the capital city gave rise to

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<sup>7</sup> Ian Ripka, *Iranian Literature in the Saljouqi and Mongol Periods*, translated by Yaqoub Ajand, Gostareh, Tehran, 1985, pp. 33-34.

such villages are examined below. The remains of development from the Saljuk period can still be observed in various parts of Abianeh.<sup>8</sup>

The history and the reign of the Saljuks are best described under Rahat ol Sodoor.<sup>9</sup> Wherever comfort and peace endured they gave rise to the growth of art and cultural heritage. The Saljuk dynasty provided people with stability, comfort and peace of mind. Abianeh benefited greatly from this period, with regard to its glamour and beauty, arts and crafts, and so on.

### 3.16. The Jameh Mosque

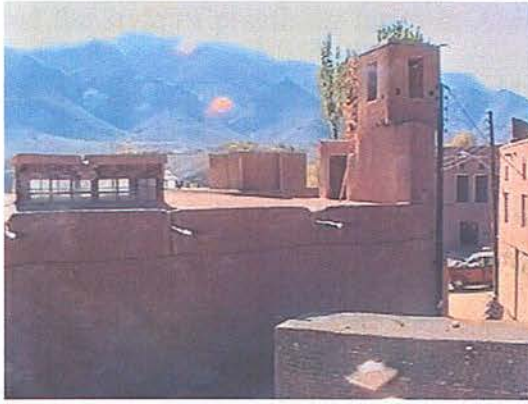
The original building can be dated by the decorative timber Mehrab<sup>10</sup> to 477 H.G. and places the settlement amongst a high order of its kind at that time following the establishing of Islam in the region. The decorative features of the main beams, columns, capitals and the roof are of sachet Poosh (Cover) and geometrical patterns. These details can be observed in the main mosque which covers an area of 72 square metres and a height of 4.5 metres, and they recall the design of the roof of the Apadana at the ancient city of Persepolis 2500 years BC.

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<sup>8</sup>Morteza Ravandi, The Social History of Iran, Amir Kabir Publications, Tehran, Bitā, Volume 2, pp. 264-268.

<sup>9</sup>Mohamadebneh Aliebnah Soleiman ol Ravandi, Easy writings and Easy sayings in the history of the Saljuks, Amir Kabir Publications, Tehran, 1364.

<sup>10</sup>Mehrab: The place of Imam "The high priest" of the mosque or the region. The holiest location in the mosque. Dictionary of Dehkhoda, vol.12, p.17986.



**Figure 112: The Jameh mosque and its roof lighting “An addition to the original building” view from the east to west. Single minaret mostly used in the Tasano period rather than Tashano. Most Shiat mosques have two Minarets.**

These features have been carefully restored during recent years. In the main hall a high seat called the manbar <sup>11</sup> is located. Constructed with highly decorative timber work the chair is a unique work of art of the period and exhibits a detail handicraft that the local carpenters had achieved. This was the art of Monabatkari, <sup>12</sup> with walnut framed in garland and projected vegetation, and with engraving in the style of Koofi <sup>13</sup> choreography. Thus this single icon was a true representation of the pride they had in their belief and the way they pursued their art. It is not often that nature and flowers are referred to in Islam, in fact iconographic symbolism in Islam is not common in most Moslem regions.

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<sup>11</sup> Manbar: A stepped high seat for delivery of the sermon and the prayers by Men. A high seating or platform constructed of timber for the delivery of speeches. Dictionary of Dehkhoda Vol.13 , p.19088

<sup>12</sup> Monabatkari: Engraving on wood, resulting in indentations and projections of patterns. Dictionary of Dehkhoda. vol.13. p.19057.

<sup>13</sup> Koofiwriting: A very basic Islamic script, one of the original languages the koran was written in, as depicted by Javad Yousavali Sani “Dictionary of the art of calligraphy, Tehran 1363, p. 37.



It is therefore, a fact that the style of practising Islam in Abianeh observes a unique and special ritual, as indeed is the community's overall social behaviour.

### 3.17. The Mosque of "Parzaleh"

In the Parzaleh quarter of the village an old mosque stands and houses a Shabestan (1) on its ground floor parallel to the street. This connects to a narrow corridor by way of a double leaf door, which in turn leads to a single leaf door that is decorated with flower garlands with engraved motifs and has the date 701 inscribed. The main hall is of the Safavid period which has a narrow Shabestan (Basement mosque), dating to the Gajar period. This mosque was commissioned by two brothers: one built the building, while the other paid for the upkeep. The mosque has both a relationship in terms of its internal and external spaces, and is in keeping with the character of this settlement. Objects within take multipurpose shape and spaces are fully realised.



Figure 113: The mosque of Miandeh or Parzaleh



### 3.18. The Mosque of Yousman

This mosque is located in the Yosman region of the settlement, which also houses a very old Shabestan. Until recent years a tree of Narvand (of the hard wood family) grew in front of this mosque and was dated in excess of five hundred years in age. Due to extremities in temperature and wind, it eventually had to be uprooted. The strategic location of both tree and mosque strongly imply a relationship of age. This mosque is a single room type which is common within the settlement. The mosque of Chehel Angosht (Forty fingers) in the Khanegah sector of the village, the mosque of Chashmeh (spring) in the lower section of the village, and the mosque of Palizeh each follows this type.

### 3.19. The Imam zadeh

This Emamzadeh (Actual translation means "The birth place of Imams (son of the Imam?)", in fact is the burial area of a religious leader or a prophet. It is a place of meditation and prayer, and a building which is said to house the burial chambers of the two sons of Emam Musa Kazem. It is located in the paeendeh (Lower section of the settlement) district.

It has the only decorative turquoise tiled Hexagonal Conical Dome, which stands noticeably higher than all the other flat roofs in its region. It is an icon in its own right.

The building is designed around a central courtyard with peripheral, relatively large spaces, rooms and the main burial chamber. To the south of the building an open space enjoys a view over the central courtyard and the fruit gardens and the

valley beyond. It stands majestically high, well above the river and plateau below. It provides visitors with breathtaking panoramic views of the landscape framed by very simple timber columns. Historically this Emamzadeh was the place of gathering and congregation for the masses. It also was the termination of the new and old sectors of the settlement. This building is an amalgamation of a series of important historical influences from its inception to the present day. Its sense of place is derived from the initial dwellings which were set up by the early settlers as the end of the settlement, or what is now known as the Paendeh or Herdah. Its internal symmetry and formal treatment echoes the classicism of the Safavid and Qajar periods. Consequently it works eclectically as an inner courtyard and as a formal garden design recalling the Fin Garden of Kashan and, perhaps, the classical heritage of the serene Iranian landscape and gardens of the Sassanian era. The open portico and panoramic views arguably echo the ideas of a classical world world, recalling that of Alexander the Great. Finally the Emanzadeh absorbs an aura and formal iconographic character from its octagonal dome, where religious connotations from Islam are apparent.



Figure 114: The Emamzadeh



### 3.20. Housing during the Saljuk Period

“Chahar-Sofeh” housing (12) in a variety of forms was built in the Saljuk period. Some of these are still standing. The characteristic of these houses is such that they have been designed to cater for two seasons: the ground floor for winter and the first floor for the summer. They are generally rectangular in shape, with their four corners roomed and the middle spaces open in a cross form. The central space formed a hearth for cooking and in some cases a stream was allowed to enter at that point. The central space was left open at roof level for light and ventilation. It could be argued that this may be the first form of an atrium design. It is relevant to state that in Abianeh only two forms of building are inwardly looking: one is the Chahar-Sofeh, the other being the Mosques or the Ziaratgah. All other buildings are essentially outward looking in their building design. During the Saljuk period they were built very modestly. These houses were so designed that their functions internally could be changed. However the Gust room and the storage areas were dedicated spaces. The Mehman Khaneh (The guest room) was decorated to a higher standard and had special niches and internal carvings in plaster work which were mostly added in the Safavid period. They featured sensitively formed windows with timber lattice work. The rooms opened on to balconies through double doors at the higher and more central ends of the Rashtah or Rasteh (The main route through the settlement). Although these types of houses came from other regions of Iran and were eclectic in character, they were designed in such a way that they were fully integrated within the fabric of the settlement and thus have contributed a new type of Chahar-Sofeh, unique to Abianeh.



Figure 115: The Chahar-Sofeh house, a unique evolution of a house type from inception of Abianeh to the current day, encapsulating all their daily needs, in its heyday "a machine for living in". Picture by: (Picture by: Kamran Jibraili 1988 Axbress, Tehran- Iran. Soffeh A roofed space with in the house. A summer house with roof. Moeen Dictionary vol.2 page 2156.

### 3.21. Observations concerning the life-style of the people during the Saljuk period.

In the era of the Saljuks, the inhabitants of the settlement were apparently prosperous and content. They traded with the adjoining towns and cities in the region, such as Kashan, Esfahan and further to Kerman and Yazd. They did this by providing themselves with a Shotorkhaneh <sup>14</sup> around the settlement, making themselves able to

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<sup>14</sup> Shotorkhaneh: Oshtor Khaneh, camel stables. The sleeping and resting place for camels. A place to feed and look after camels. Dehkhoda Dictionary.



accommodate the long distances. One of the successful trades adopted from Yazd in the Safavid age was the weaving and dying of cloth. The clothing worn by the inhabitants of the village resembles this today. However clothing recovered from this era also demonstrates their talent for Soozan Doozi (tapestry) and handicrafts related to dress making, unique in their type and design.

### 3.22. Abianeh in the Safavid Density

The advent of the Safavid dynasty, specifically the rule of Shah Abbas I, who chose Isfahan for his capital city, gave rise to commercial and political activity to the nation as a whole. Abianeh also benefited in terms of growth and development. Much is written about Shah Abbas I and his ideals by which he ruled the nation. While he was well known for his hard handed political cruelty and secular rule, he was also keen to embrace just laws and fair play. Consequently he earned a reputation for protecting human rights. One commentator writes of him:

King Abbas treats the poor and helpless as his children and they would consider him as the great father. He considers the strong and rich as the fathers of tomorrow so that he could charge them more taxes and could take their wealth for the nation's treasury.

Shah Abbas could integrate with people and would welcome all his subjects to his court. This enabled him to find out about the true picture of how things really were in the country. As all his ministers and other government officials would advise him against it, he would have this to say to them:

You are all affected by those who are thieves and ill doers. You wish me to be away from my people so as to let you get away with your wrong doings otherwise who so

ever wishes to rule with justice and good decision making, must be aware of what is happening and how his subjects think.<sup>15</sup>

They would reply “we fear your highnesses safety” In turn he would reply “My keeper is God”.

So it was that in this age all religions and ways of life were tolerated and the average Abianeh dwellers were able live their own way of life. They benefited by the king’s attention and his special delight in sending his guests to Abianeh for leisure.

It was customary but rare to receive a Toyoul<sup>16</sup> from the king if the place was special and needed upkeep. Natanz became the Tauoul of the king, which included Abianeh. Thus what was relevant to the dynasty as a pleasurable place was extended to Abianeh as an important place to be looked after. This brought qualities of citizenship and prosperity and strengthened such activities as handicrafts, calligraphy, eclectic architecture, style and symbolism.

An episode from the past refers to Shah Abbas making a journey to Natanz for leisure (16). He was confronted by a group of natives of Abianeh dressed in rags who had gone to visit him for justice. They complained about the corruption amongst the local rulers and tax collectors. The king heard them out and was most impressed. He ordered their complaints to be investigated and thereafter he paid a direct compensation to each and every one of them so that they could return satisfied by his

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<sup>15</sup> John Shardan memoir as interpreted by Abbasi, Vol. 5 pp. 465-466

<sup>16</sup> Tayoul: Budgetary sum allocated by the king to an area or a person due to their loyalty, or being deserving, or a yearly salary. Farhangeh Moeen, vol. 1, p..1183.

intervention. This tale demonstrates the honesty, pride and forwardness of the Abianeh residents at the time. They stood up for their beliefs and rights.

### 3.23. Housing in the Safavid Dynasty

The Safavid dynasty had the most influence in the region, and the influence of Safavid rules and policies over all aspects of their civilisation is referred to as the base of Isfahan's. From the early seventeenth century the Safavid period during the reign of the Shah Abbas I established utopian ideas of a "neoclassical" civilisation based on, logic and formalism. The Safavids looked to beautiful forms and the sublime. They looked to integrate tradition and architecture with a blend of Persian gardens and centuries-old traditions while entertaining foreign classicism and advisors. Shah Abbas was one of the most open minded rulers when it came to importing something which he felt would be beneficial to the aesthetics of the city. The idea of having a city with an international look appealed to him.

The Safavids looked at the city as a meaningful physical symbol of all the inherent values, prosperity and strengths of the country, the major part of which took about twenty-five years for them to realise. Axial, symmetrical and hierarchical monumental spaces to a reasonable scale gave the city of Isfahan a harmony, which is unique even to this day. This gave rise to a renaissance of Persian architecture forming the



foundation to the fine art and architectural discourse, which can be summarised as the Isfahan style.<sup>17</sup>

The architect of this utopia was Sheikh Bahaii, who believed in creating an eternal base for mythological religious and philosophical order. As he can be considered the pillar of Isfahanism, he was the initiator of indoctrination and the founder of this tradition. He concluded in approaching the issue with logic, with romantic notions of isolation and illumination and joy to fulfil his ideas. If it is difficult to group the different styles in art and urban development in the case of Isfahanism, then it can be stated that in terms of town planning and the arts and crafts movement of the day, painting, music and landscape architecture certainly formed the basis of the new mixture of modernity and tradition in the history of art and architecture of the region.

It was first in the Safavid period that in the field of housing many different types of building was initiated. One of these was the Chahar-Sofeh, which was designed with regularity and clarity and was adopted in many forms into the neighbouring settlements such as Abianeh.

In the past attention was given to high ceilings especially in their hallways. However in Chahar-Sofeh planned dwellings during this period, the first floor was the piano nobile, the principal floor, and was allocated to the guests and housed the main living spaces.

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<sup>17</sup> Seyed Mohsen Habibi, *Isfahanism, understanding the right and meaning of the Government*. No.23. 1375, pp. 1-7.

The Chahar-Sofeh house was built on a flat plateau in such a way that in the main four corners of the building there are rooms built of roughly 2.5 x 4.5 metres, rectangular and parallel sides. Along the main sides, rooms or spaces for the 'Dastdoon' storage or sitting rooms were allocated. In the middle of the ceiling a rectangular or octagonal opening, or oculus, was designed to allow light in to the building.

The entrance gate to some of these houses was built of concaved half-vaulted arched ceilings, with Yazdi Bandi<sup>18</sup> and motifs and decoration with frescos<sup>19</sup> depicted of the period. Some of these still remain, and are known to be pioneered in their excellence by master painter Reza Abbasi<sup>20</sup>, the works of which are renowned throughout Isfahan and influenced many followers.

Throughout the buildings of this period, the use of timber and mud bricks naturally sun dried to the desired conditions are extensively used. The style of architecture and emphasis on symmetry and interior decoration with a layer of base "Kahgel" mud reinforced with hay, demonstrates the unity of a general identity throughout these settlements.

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<sup>18</sup> Yazdi kari: The art of constructing or decorating of ceilings by the subdivision of the spaces geometrically creating a geometrical pattern with the construction, a style evolved in the city of Yazd

<sup>19</sup> Reza Abbasi, was the most famous painter and artist to the court of the Safavid, Shah Abbas, I. 1044 H. Central Culture Moeen publications, vol. 5, 1995, p. 596.

<sup>20</sup> It is said of Reza Abbasi that The King was so fond of his work that at night he would hold out the golden chandeliers to assist the painter in his work and on completion he would kiss his hands. Reference of the history of Isfahan, as written by Master Jalol'odeeneh Hamayi, 1996, p. 281.

In the entrances to these "Chahar-Sofeh" dwellings, the entrance doorways were decorated and built of single and double leaf doors with "Halqeh"<sup>21</sup>, "Koube" (knockers) and "Golemikhi" (Knobbed Nails) (1). In these houses the best rooms would be constructed of five doors, used to entertain guests and were known as the "Mehman Khaneh".<sup>22</sup> The walls facing the sun had door dimensions of 80x120 centimetres. These had with them timber geometrical patterned framing, originally in a square base background then developed to an arched frame within a square framing, while exquisitely decorated and carved. In some Chahar-Sofeh dwellings, the south facing sides would have windows and doors constructed in a larger framed opening - allowing vertical mullions or columns supporting a horizontal lintel. But then framed within might be a beautifully decorated (in "Shabakeh")<sup>23</sup> sash window sliding vertically with pulleys and weights to justify its stability. This invention is reflected in many of the buildings of prominence and importance, stretching right across the central Iran region. These sash windows were known as "Orsi"<sup>24</sup> in Abianeh, of which two types still exist.

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<sup>21</sup> Halqe: Ringed knocker on the door for the female caller. Koub: A single elongated weight knocker to announce the male visitor. Golmikh: A rose headed long nail with the function of a strong nail and the aesthetics of a wild flower.

<sup>22</sup> Mehmankhaneh: A guest room, the area of the house segregated from the rest and maintained to receive people outside the family.

<sup>23</sup> Shabakeh: A geometrical framing of windows and doors constructed in timber.

<sup>24</sup> Orsi: Sash windows, which were used extensively in Iran especially in the old houses of Isfahan, Kashan and Yazd provinces." Introduction to the Islamic architecture of Iran, Memarian, 1995, p.356.



### 3.24. The Historical Remains of the Safavid Period

In the Safavid dynasty many mosques were repaired, enlarged or erected such as the mosque of Parzaleh at Abianeh which has a beautiful entrance door from this period. The mosques of Hajatgah<sup>25</sup> which was built in 905 H.G and Yosman were among single cell mosques built in the settlement.

The house of "Khanegah" was for the entertainment of royalty and those of Sufi tendencies:<sup>26</sup>, lovers of God, music and poetry. The remains of their intricate designs are still apparent on the entrances and interiors, noticeably on the entrance doorway and its architraves. The existence of this particular building was so important at the time that they named the area after it "Pakhoongah" meaning ( Pass Khoonegah / Khanegah). This building was owned at different times by very special people. A second Khanegah was also located to the south of Yosman which housed the "common" dervishes.<sup>27</sup> As there were gardens and orchards around this house so they named this area Bar Khangah, meaning 'next to Khanegah'.

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<sup>25</sup>Khanegah: The place where the dervishes and Sufis lived and practiced Sufism. Farhangeh Moeen, p. 1392.

<sup>26</sup>Sufi- One who follows the Sufi philosophy, who follows the righteous path and is at one with himself and god and lives a modest but meaningful life. Farhangeh Moeen, p. 1093.

<sup>27</sup> Dervish: A retreated person, following a simple life, living on charity and reciting religious songs and poetry. Farhangeh Moeen, p. 1518.

### 3.25. Building Changes after the Safavids

Great damage to Iran's cultural heritage came after the demise of the Safavids and this extended to the end of Qajar period. Safety was compromised after the Safavids followed by the internal turmoil of Nadaershah Afshar and the relative calm of the Zand period in the south of the country. As everywhere else, this had a great effect on Abianeh. The internal wars and fighting between different factions encouraged lawlessness and highwaymen who sought refuge in the Karkas Mountains. One of these was Nayeab Hossain Kashi who gave his name to an uprising against the regime and the "Mashrootiat" or constitution<sup>28</sup> (See the Diaries of Clode Aneh, 1909). Neglect and change superseded the continuity of prosperity. The evolution of the built environment and tradition had been abruptly stopped. From then, self-reliance and community forces determined the survival of each settlement. It was also during this period that for the first time the use of white bricks and new materials became fashionable due to their availability and ease of use. These gradually replaced the old mud bricks and timber windows. The regional material of "Khesht Va Gell" became less attractive, in recent years to building owners, due to its heavy maintenance and in many settlements timber doors and windows were replaced by sectional steel angles, which have dominated Iran until today. Abianeh resisted this change until relatively recently when areas on the edge of the settlement were affected. This stage can be considered the first sustained damage of Abianeh and reflected the first breakdown in the continuity and sensibility of its community. However, the bond between the

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<sup>28</sup> Clode Aneh: Ferouz Eshraghi, Isfahan from the point of view of foreign visitors, Atropart, Isfahan, 1378, pp.620-633

people and their sense of community was not inextricably lost. In fact this was deeply dependent on other forces, which hold Abianeh together to this day.



**Chapter Four:**

**The Study of the People and their  
Customs**

## Chapter Four: Study of the People and Their Customs

### Introduction

Chapter four examines the specific quality of life, customs and religions, with special attention to their particular characteristics and cultural references, ceremonies and the unique social behaviour inherent to Abianeh.

### Study of the People and Their Customs

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### 4.1. Anthropological Study

The previous chapters about Abianeh have been concerned with urban growth and its historical & geographical status and consequences. However, Abianeh could not be summarised by those alone. The facets of Abianeh are so far reaching that each element needs to be considered in its own right.

Craftwork ranging from carpentry, such as the beautiful geometric multi-sectional windows and doors, to the hubble-bubble, jewellery making, silver work and the production of the most elegant necklaces and bracelets (or in the native language Colengoon), and on to their hand crochet knitting and needle stitching by numbers all in themselves reveal an intricate taste in the stylistic genre of a specific time. To this day the average Abianeh person appears to live two lives: one for the country at large and the other as a form of social identity in terms of what they were no better illustrated than their garments, so significantly and purposefully made, which distinguishes them among all the regions of the country.

Seemingly in every direction the settlement offers a different and exciting physical form with a whole story of its own. Such exemplars include the mosque of Hajateh, the mosque of Parzaleh, and several forts, each echoing tales and memories engraved in their stones and mortar. Their history is passed on orally from generation to generation to this day thanks to a continuity consolidated by the school community, the family and the elders. This is a society historically locked within its own web of revitalisation, regeneration and continuity now under duress due to age and indifference.





Figure 116: The main door to the mosque of Jameh in the heart of the settlement, this door was once stolen. Fortunately its export was intercepted by the authorities at Teheran's airport

The ongoing interest in Abianeh was never arbitrary. Abianeh has always been a settlement of great interest to tourists and outsiders. It has always offered a different style of life - an intriguing lifestyle in many layers.

Almost every inhabitant of the settlement is literate and aware of the nation's state of

existence. It is as if people are almost addicted to knowledge: poetry, theology, political awareness, and each given expression in polite and entertaining conversation.

Their beliefs are complex resulting from an accumulation of many years of historical development while incorporating pagan beliefs that have descended through time. These have imbedded themselves in everyday lives and can be understood in terms of iconographic symbolism and “Telesm”<sup>1</sup>.



**Figure 117**

Figures 117-119: To avert evil and not to be cursed or brought bad luck by strangers, these objects were made from different herbs and spices and other natural produce, which the inhabitants believe have tremendous powers.

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<sup>1</sup> Telesm: An icon made to avert evil from one's life or belongings.





Figure 118

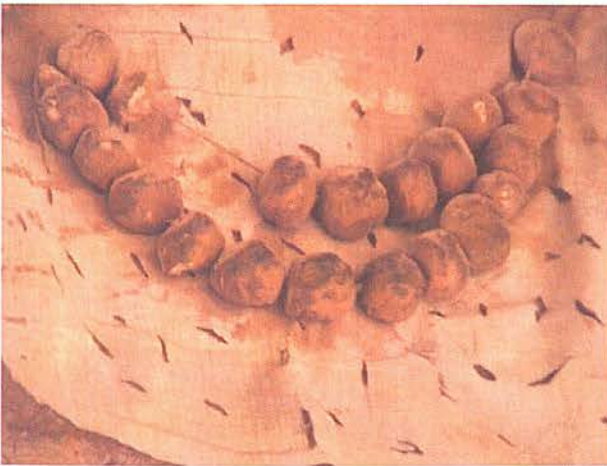


Figure 119

One example is the needles of Spand (a string of beads sewn together in a necklace format and hung on walls). Zakhm Cheshman (Eye burner) comprises two parts: one which is a cloth of about 60x 50cm, while the other is a small conical shaped solid mix made from different herbs and spices, milk, Spand and flowers “Gol Khatmi and Chahargol” are strung together in a continuous bead between five and twenty. This is then attached to the white cloth and hung on walls or entrances to houses thereby providing protection for the sick, especially children of the house against any ill thoughts and wishes. “Cheshmharo Varmichineh”, is a local expression,



which means that it averts evil eyes and ill feelings towards the place.



Figure 120: The items of Ziaratgah Cheshzakhm and Spand are laid on the walls to avert evil from the place. This is a pagan belief, which is widespread in Iran in different forms.

The community and social behaviour in Abianeh until recently were concentrated into two groups. The first hierarchy was associated with the owners, the landlords; the second with the smaller plot owners and landlords. Hence each section was related to another subsection in such a way that: the landlords of the first category related to the second category “who formed the main Arbabs”<sup>1</sup>, and in turn related then to the tenant of category one and the tenant of the second category. This was developed to such an extent that the landlord of category one had the right of “Rishsefidi”(meaning the white bearded, an expression used to acknowledge hierarchy to the elders of the settlement) and was given the duty of solving the people’s differences and to adjudicate over ‘legal’ problems.

In addition teachers and doctors benefited from the same respect. In turn they were followed by the craftsmen such as the leading carpenters, blacksmiths, silversmiths, and so on, and all regarded as the master craftsmen of the settlement. Thus the

hierarchy of ownership and the hierarchy of the useful and serviceable people in town formed the governing structure of the settlement.

Traditionally marriages in this settlement were also linked to their social groups internally. Until recently outside marriages involving other villages or townspeople were taboo and took place very rarely. The underlying structure to the community was co-operation and concern for each other and respect for their established inner hierarchy.

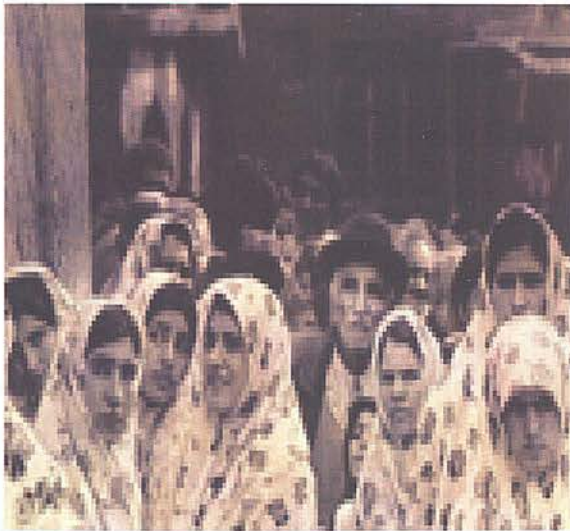


Figure 121: Eligible townfolk of yester-year, mostly now married and departed from Abianeh. Picture by Kamran Jebrailli, 1988, Express, Tehran- Iran:

The social discipline and commercial interactions were concerned with two elements: one was the quality of the discipline which governed the society and the second the belief of the society in that discipline which ruled the settlement from the lowest category of social standing to the highest. The costs of common maintenance of the settlement were proportionately generated. They covered such matters as: the rent of water mills, the restoration and upkeep of public baths, the salary of the keeper of



the public baths, the fees for hiring animals for transport, the maintenance of the lighting system of the baths, together with other public utilities and common spaces. In addition the upkeep the Emamzadeh and the mosques, the roads and by-passes and the consequences of 'forces majeure', such as floods, etc. In this way everyone was involved, had a role to play, and was locked into a chain of relationships embracing socio-cultural development and unity which made Abianeh a complete place. If the cost of certain items fell above the capability of the community as a whole then the responsibility fell upon the first category of landlords. Therefore everyone contributed in relation to their social and economic means to the upkeep of the settlement in accordance with their position on the ladder of hierarchy of the settlement.

The Abianeh people were most concerned about the social structure of their society. One of the ways they maintained this discipline was to retain a keen interest in marriages outside their village, probably one of the reasons why Abianeh has a specific language of itself in keeping with its unique culture.

To cater for their special way of life the average inhabitant of Abianeh lived with two cultural codes of conduct, one for the outside world and the other for their own, inside Abianeh. This can be observed even today. They live in relation to their settlement's ideals from which their ideas and values are generated and consolidated as the base of living.

In Abianeh, unlike anywhere else in Iran, the community of men and woman enjoy a very liberal coexistence based on a set of principals. They have enjoyed this harmony



and freedom for centuries and this, in turn, affected everything developed and interrelated in their community.

They were so conscious of their limitations and socio-economic balance that, unlike anywhere else, they adopted a limit of two to three children per family, thereby ensuring continuity and sustainability.

They also did not believe in polygamy as a norm and divorce hardly ever occurred. The dowry of the woman was set very high in such a way that the woman would inevitably end up owning almost 2/3 of the total wealth of the man. This was done to ensure that the women of the settlement would be seen as partners and not merely as wives, a role, which was permanent and elevated them to a partnership level. The dowries were expressed in ownership of lands, houses or orchards - therefore every family made sure that they acquired such properties for their men. Obtaining land was seen as a priority in everyone's life (not an Islamic indoctrination). This is in contradiction to the usual Islamic code of conduct. It can be concluded that Abianeh has social structures and customs that are unique. The identity of this community, that is so apparent in the physical structure of the settlement, is mirrored in the customs of its people.

This also meant that they tended to sell less property than they acquired, and, as no-one was inclined to sell land while continuing to acquire, they ended up owning vast tracts of land outside Abianeh, thus extending their landlord ownership wider and further (one reason why Abianeh was considered a place of affluence in the region).

Historically therefore, people tended to inherit property within Abianeh that they never sold and this resulted in non-uniform developments within the

settlement and a complexity of ownership. Physical separation of these properties within the settlement became more difficult as time went by reaching a point where today, due to overlaying of development one building could be owned by multiple owners at different levels: ground floor, first floor and so on - all with their separate entrances. In this way, people developed a toleration and patience for each other, demonstrating the notion of neighbourly love and respect.

Eventually this progressively became so difficult and confusing that selling or even inheriting properties became very difficult, an issue which vexes even today.

Complacency and a lack of interest in selling gradually affected the buildings, which were left to weather away. This was another significant factor leading to the demise of the settlement and its built fabric.

However it is also necessary to examine some specific aspects of social behaviour of the inhabitants of Abianeh to understand their tendencies and sensibilities.

### 4.2. Tag Bandi

Tag bandi was one of the ways that surface water or fresh water from the springs in the higher areas was distributed amongst the farm lands in a systematic and proportionate way.

This system was also adopted in Abianeh in such a way that every "Tag" was equal to 12 hours of watering ration. In one full day two Tags were distributed. Every

farm was earmarked to receive a set amount of water in relation to its availability, taking into consideration seasonal changes and size of land.

The session of a Tag was either morning to evening or evening to the morning. The actual timing was set against the sun shining on the main forts on the high mountain or hills. The distribution of water to each plot was established by "Sarjeh"<sup>2</sup>. This was done by using a plate usually made of copper with a hole in the middle which was carefully calibrated. They would place the plate on top of a larger container full of water. The time allowed for watering a plot was then related to the time it took for the plate to sink. This exercise was rotated for every plot. The timing was set on a sinking time of 12 minutes per submergence. In this way every plot owner received the same amount of water to his land each day. This right of water to land was known as the "Sarjeh", and in turn it was protected as a right in ownership of the land; hence protected by the law until today.

The manner and amount of water a land received also determined the size of land registered to a landlord in the registration office of the settlement. In the registrar's office a comprehensive record was kept of the first and the second landlords - a copy of which would be given to a trustee of the people in town, an official who was elected unanimously by them all. The trustee kept the documents for everyday use and administration purposes. "Qafyiz", or one hundred square Zare, meant the amount of measure of land relating to one "Sarjeh"<sup>2</sup> of 12 minutes of watering. It was the duty of

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<sup>2</sup> Sarjeh: Measuring device of watering limits. 'A kind of water watch'. Dehkhoda, Dictionary, vol. 8 p. 11965.



the trustee to check the proportions outlined in the landlord's rights and to supervise its administration in situ, for which he received a salary.

Measuring and surveying the land is known in the local language as "Arpeyman"<sup>3</sup> or "Varpeymoon". It is based on the length of a piece of straight bamboo stick "Ney" which measured 2.25 Zare. Four Ney was equal to one "Gera" which was equal to 20.25 Zare. The records were kept in Arabic "Ghassabeh"<sup>1</sup>. The area of five Gassabeh was one Keeleh or Ghafeer . The area of settlement in keeleh was known as one Giri equal to 1012.5 Zare square. The area of one ordinary Jarib in this settlement was exactly 1095.2 meters square. All dimensions would be recorded by the "Siag" of the registrar office.

Complicated and specific to Abianeh in other words:

a) 1 Ney = 2.25 Zare

b) 4 Ney Square      e= One Gera = 20.25 Zar = Gassabeh in Abianeh language.

c) 5 x Gassaneh      = One keeleh or Gafiz

= One Gireh in the Abianeh dialect and is written as "Jarib".

= 1012.5 Zar

d) The Area of one Jarib = 1095.2 m<sup>2</sup>

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<sup>3</sup> Arpeyman "Method of measurement".

### 4.3. Method of Weighing

The unit of weighing was in all aspects the Sange Man Shah, equal to 6 Kg. today.

Every Man Shah was equal to two Tabriz Man, or 3 Kg. for each Tabriz Man.

Nim Man which was half a Man and then Sad-dram, Panjah Deram and Beesto panj Deram. Every Deram were equal to 16 Mesgal.

Each one Man of Shah was equal to 80 Sir which made the common Sang used as 85 Sir and the extra was said to be for alms giving and good deeds. Most of the outside trades were concerned with the Sang of 80 Sir Weight.

This can be summarised as:

Sad Man Shahi = 6 Kg

= 2 Man Tabrizi (of the province of Tabriz)

Man Tabriz = 3 Kg.

1 Deram = 16 mesgal

1 mesgal= 68 g.

Smaller denominations were: Nim Man = half Man and 100 Dram, 50 Dram and 25 Dram.

One Local sang = 85 Seer but rounded to 80 Seer for external trade. They gave away 5 Sir locally as a form of generosity and good will in trading.

### Shahbazi or Mirnorouzi

Many customs and traditional events were nationally famous and characteristic of the liberty of people taking on the establishment and succeeding. One such event was the Mir noroozi<sup>4</sup>, which has been associated with poets, writers, folklore and fables of the land. Much has been forgotten but this was a very important event in Abianeh's past. The game or the event took place five days before the New Year or the end of the old year. The people of each district chose a man to be the 'king' for five days who could rule the settlement as he pleased and through the New Year. They would clothe him in garments suitable for a king; and he was then mounted on a four-legged animal and paraded throughout his 'kingdom', i.e., the settlement. He had the right to punish any one and any command he gave would be obeyed. In effect he would be the New Year's king, "Padeshahe Noroozi" The famous poet Hafez referred to this event in his poetry: "I speak from behind the curtain and from the behind the curtain I find as if a flower is to live for five days through a reign of Mirnoroozi"<sup>5</sup>1.

According to the Abianeh elders' memory, this gave rise to the "Shahbazi"<sup>5</sup> which was held in Abianeh during the month of "Esfand"<sup>6</sup>. In reality this turned the entire

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<sup>4</sup> Mirnoroozi: A new year's representative in place of Amir, the ruler.

<sup>5</sup> Shahbazi: The game of acting as king.

<sup>6</sup> The month of Esfand: The last month of the year.



established system on its head and everyone played a part, especially the children and youths who valued it as much as the event of New Year itself.

The exact account is better given by Mr. Khansari,<sup>7</sup> who recalls this game in his childhood as a form of celebration in Abianeh. He was merely eight at the time:

In the late month of Esfand towards the evening a new air of freedom and joy filled the air and a great expectation of the New Year celebration was to begin. All the young men of the village would gather in a designated location within the village and amongst them one who was the most righteous and locally aware would be chosen to lead them, as their Mirnoroozi, into the New Year. He would be dressed up and upon his head an especially made hat from goatskin would be placed. The procession would lead him through the village and a jester would chant before him saying "Jar" or "Jarchi (in the Bazaar)", "he will have your head and I the money", while making jokes and jesting around the new king. The people near the new king would reply to the jester by chanting their rhythmic songs. At the same time Guns were fired in to the air and his presence announced throughout the settlement.

This interplay between the king and his subjects and the good humour gave the people great joy and a sense of unity.

The event could last for several days. By the last day, however, on the first break for the New Year in the main gathering space of the settlement, "Parzaleh", they would

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<sup>7</sup> Mr.Khansari: A local teacher and Scholar still resident in Abianeh.

erect a “takht”<sup>8</sup> decorated with various Persian carpets and carpet covered pillows. These were placed in the middle where the king was surrounded by his ministers and prime minister, the chief lord of Justice and additional members of the court. All around people impersonated soldiers with their muskets loaded. After hailing the New Year, the soldiers would march past their king, with their leaders instructing: “Attention! Look left!” before marching on. The soldiers at the front with guns would display fresh clothing while wearing their traditional “Giveh”<sup>9</sup>, and silk scarf with “kolah namadi”<sup>10</sup> on their heads. This went on for about an hour. Then a group of soldiers would act out the part of enemies and attack from the high ground while another group would defend from the lower ground and then there followed an almighty ‘battle’ between the two factions. The sounds of people moving around, the sounds of gunfire, the smell of gun powder in the air, and the hustle and bustle of people participating in the excitement, all unified in the celebration that encapsulated their New Year. The spirit of community was therefore enhanced for the people while setting them up to meet the New Year’s challenges and potential rewards.

The pageant would continue after the enemy were defeated. This was followed by summary judgement and subsequent punishment in the wake of the ‘wrath’ of the king. Hanging was carried out by tying a rope around the recipient’s waist and people were shot as though for real with natural dye colours. More judgements would be passed and punishments carried out in jest and acting. This could continue for three

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<sup>8</sup> Takht: A raised platform in the shape of a rectangle used for sleeping or sitting on.

<sup>9</sup> Kolah namadi: A hat made of Namad " a kneaded woollen material

<sup>10</sup> Giveh: Locally made shoes made of leather straps and woollen material.

days and nights with a variety of different shows and plays. Thus a carnival allowed all to join in and participate in mock reality.

The position of the Takht would change from the Parzaleh Square during the day to Ziaratgah Square in the evening. The celebrations would be followed by courtesy visits to one's friends and family for the New Year greetings – generally younger people were obliged to visit their elders.

Sometimes extreme weather conditions prevented such celebrations throughout the settlement. Following the 1979 revolution, laws prohibiting guns meant that all firearms were to be handed in to the authorities. Consequently all the silver, jewels and decorative features were removed from the guns and these were conveyed to the authorities by donkey, as if timber for the fire was being taken away. With this episode went the tradition of Shahbazi, which lingers on in the older generations of Abianeh as a sweet memory.<sup>11</sup>

### 4.3.1. Introduction to the Local Handicrafts

Many villages in Iran are engaged in producing goods and materials particular to their specific region other than the normal agricultural and dairy products. In Abianeh the

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<sup>11</sup> Zeinalabedeene Khansari Abianee, The Cultural heritage and people of Abianeh, National Heritage publications of Iran. pp. 153-157.



people specialised in certain handicrafts which were renowned throughout the entire region. It was the women who mostly engaged themselves in these crafts.

Local fame could be gained through making "Giveh"<sup>12</sup>, "Esfand Doozi" or "Silversmithing of Jewellery", "Dorrodgari"<sup>13</sup>, local clothing, and weaving carpets in the Kashan style.

In the field of herbal medicine, "Khakeh Shir" (wild seeds known to be good for digestion and remedying upset stomachs), "Katira" (herbal medicines good for a range of illnesses), "Dermameh" (additional medicinal herbs), Camomile (a natural antibiotic and useful for promoting a calming of nerves), were readily available. Indeed natural herbs locally harvested from the hillsides and meadows or by planting directly into prepared beds. These included wild mint or Spand, which was widely accepted as an herb, as an Icon of beauty and mythology to avert evil, that it was actively used on doorways, walls, houses, mosques and schools.

### 4.3.2. Menswear "Pooshakeh Mardan"

From the Safavid period men's clothes evolved into a fixed uniform continuing until today. It comprised:

the "Kolahe Namadi" (a hat created from Namad, a rolled and beaten material made entirely of wool); the "Gabba" (a shoulder-hung long coat); an undershirt known as the "Arkhalog", a scarf worn around the waist known as "Shaleh Kamar", wide cotton trousers known as "Tonban", with zigzagged embroidery to confirm the marital status

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<sup>12</sup> Locally made woollen shoes

of the man - as opposed to the straight lines for single men; the locally made shoes referred to as “Giveh”, winter wear known as “Kamarchin” or “Sardari”; and leather winter shoes known as “Chamoosh”.

Rich townspeople and landlords would typically wear the “Gabba”, a prominent long coat hung from their shoulders, or the “Shenel” made of “Termeh”. A conical/cylindrical hat would also be worn by them which was intricately designed with geometrical shapes and was combined with an “Aragchin”, or scarf, made from silk with characteristic embroidery known as “Aragchin tar”.

In contemporary society only the baggy trousers are in common use, an echo of this flamboyant, stylish look.

### 4.3.3. Women's wear “Pooshakeh Zanan”

The ordinary clothing of the woman had to be attractive and fulfil the utilitarian function of being suitable for working, often alongside men. It comprised:

“Chargad”, a headscarf made of material usually decorated with floral designs, square in shape and about 1.5m square - this was folded in a triangular shape, placed upon the head, and tied by the aid of a nail-clip to the underside of the chin. It covered the hair, shoulders and area of the chest;

a wide shirt and collar, with slits, floral patterns on a dark cloth, covering most of the body;

a skirt or “Shaliteh”, which has many folds and rippled cloth, is extended to

below the knee, requires twelve metres of material, and has a highly decorated rim made from patterned ribbon. For married women, the "Tonban" or underskirt would be in a deep red colour, symbolic of her fertility and life;

A high stocking which light blue is for unwed girls and deep blue for married ladies.

In deep winter on top of their clothing women wore a cover called "Arkhaieg" or "Neem Taneh" or a waistcoat or jacket made of velvet called "Korti". This item was inherited from the Qajar Dynasty and is still used today.

It is interesting to note that the woman of Abianeh do not normally wear the nationally adopted "Chador" or veil. When attending the mosque the chador is made available at the building entrance.

Like the men, shoes or "Giveh" were locally made for women, and like the men, in winter they also had leather shoes known as "Chamoosh".

The noticeable feature of women's clothing in Abianeh is the use of large bright flowers as decorative features recalling the beautiful natural colours of the region's flora, especially roses.

Until recently it was usual for the women who were approaching their senior years, to wear a different headpiece to the "Chargad" more suited to their stature and universally recognised as a sign of respect. The "Poute"<sup>1</sup> was made of cotton or silk with patterns of parallel lines. Approximately 2.5 by 0.7 metres in length, it had two of its edges laced with long individual strings. The middle part would be placed on top of the head and the sides flipped over the shoulders. It was fastened on one side to the top of the head, with the lace part falling over the forehead. It would at the



same time cover the body adequately. This head piece also apparently dates back to the Zoroastrian period in ancient Iran.

### 4.4. Ladies Jewellery

Traditionally ladies' jewellery was of two main types:

Rings of differencing styles known as "Shaste", which generally had a single precious stone and up to six rings were worn on the thumb.

"Mangoli", were larger rings worn as bracelets around the wrist with a plain silver finish and each weighing about 32 Mesgal or 160 grams of pure silver. It was usual to present a pair of each to the bride on her wedding night.

"Alangoo" were bracelets, made of silver with intricate designs, sometimes with individual round pieces of silver ball.

The "Gardanband", or "Sinehriz", was a necklace made of old and new silver coins.

"Bazoo band" was a cylindrical piece with engravings, often with inlays of silk and contained a secret chamber to house a "Telesm" or talisman imbued with religious "wishes". Worn on the upper arm or on the hand itself, this was a piece of jewellery associated in ancient times with the Greeks and Romans, especially their warriors.

"Tangeh" was a string of jewels worn during the marriage ceremony on the forehead. It was woven with pieces of gold and silver and in the middle it featured a square shaped rosette.

In the past, the nose was pierced with a gold ring worn on the right side of the face. The design was developed into a single nail-like piece resembling a beauty spot. In recent years this practice has stopped.

Few pieces of jewellery from the past are in daily use. More typically jewellery is locked away with men and women's clothing to be used when there is a wedding. These items can be used as "Jahizeh" or dowry placed in a copper plated container, otherwise a carved and lockable box called the "Tassnogreyineh". The Jahizeh might include other heirlooms, especially items of clothing, stored from the time of Safavid period. These items were passed down through the generations and to this day clothing from the early Safavid period can be found in Abianeh of magnificent design and needle work, typically with buttons of the same material. Many have been purchased and taken from Abianeh by tourists as souvenirs. These include the magnificent "Gaba" for men made from silver and silk, and the "Masgati" or scarf which was tied to the Gaba. Probably originating from the town of "Masgat", this would also be kept for and used by the groom on his wedding day.

### 4.5. Language

The people of Abianeh speak pure Farsi or "Salis", without any accent. However the actual language of the village itself is an eclectic dialect formulated by various influences in their historical development. Known as "Pahlavi Sassani", the language originated in Natanz, "Symeh" and "Josheganeh Ghali" districts, and was used widely in this region as a whole before the greater changes that took place in the migrations of people to and from the region.

Their language also has similarities to the central region of Iran, namely: "Semnan" or "Sabzevar". The language exhibits an easy structure. A word is pronounced without particular elongations in any letter and is easily transcribed into the Farsi language. The words used were not corrupted over time, and have remained pure in their applications and the use of the dialect. In Farsi, three movements or suffix and prefix and past are used and applied, "Zeer", "Zebar" and "Pish" with three vowels. In Pahlavi Sassani only one movement and one vowel are used. They also have some extra valves and sounds, which are not found in Farsi.

The full extent of their language is associated with many kinds of words and phrases which have accumulated through time while affected by commercial, social and political changes. Fundamentally this is a language which was applied to everyday use and every word had a root which helped identify its origins. In this study every word cannot be considered but on examining the word Abianeh itself, the application can be observed. One of the teachers of the village, Mr. Mohammad Khansari Abianehi, has this to say in his book commissioned by the National Heritage of Iran:

In the origins of the name of the settlement as written and referred to through the ages has been the word "Abb", "ya", "na", straight translation means is there water or not? Or we should look at the villager's view, who called the village "Viyooneh", or "Viyaneh" and recognise them as "Viyaneh ee" meaning of Vianeh. In some areas referred to as "Biyane ee" meaning the same. Or sometimes "Viyoneg" The use of the word "g" or "j" the end of the words gave them the identity of being from there. In this way they related to the place of their origin, saying that they are "Viyounja" or "Viyounjaam" I am from there. If for example one came from Kerman province he



would be "Kermanj or Kermanja ee" being from Kerman.

The origins of "Viyaneh" were from a word meaning without seeds "Bedaneh" and "Bidestan" which meant forest of the three Bid or willows. This referred also to Bidzar meaning a plot of Bid trees, which in relation to Bianeh meaning the place of Bid trees. The composition of this with water or "Ab" and transcribed into Farsi brings us to the word "Abianehe": a place where water and willows were plentiful.

Yet another view is proposed by Master Mohammad Mehriar in his book *In the Name of*. The culture of the past settlements and villages of Esfahan emulate another word concerning Abianehe: - In the word 'Abianehe' we have three sections which realize the word, "Ab, y, aneh". For ease of working it out, this can be analysed back to front. In this way "aneh" is a participle completing a word in the Persian language, such as "Shahaneh" or to the king, "Saraneh" the heads of, and "Angoshtaneh" the fingers of, and so on. In all these cases the relationships are completed by the use of "aneh". The vowel "ab" originates from a word "APA" from the dynasty of the "Avosta" language of ancient Persia. The middle letter "y" was used to separate prefix from suffix yet link them together. And so it was that Abianehe came about as "Ab-y-aneh".

Therefore in the word Abianehe alone the relationship between nature, historical ascendancy and cultural intervention can be observed. This gave rise to what is not arbitrary and in fact is deeply identifying this place in relation to its vertical history in one region.

### 4.6. Religion "Mazhab"

The origins of the inhabitants' belief system stems from the "Zartosht" Dynasty, The historical ancient ruins of the fire temples bear testimony to this assertion. This in turn arguably dates them all ultimately to the Sassanian" or Sassanid era. Therefore the serious development of a Zoroastrian culture and religion was being actively practiced in Abianeh. However on following the acceptance of Islam, and there is no clear date when this exactly happened, the fire temples were converted to mosques. For example the fire Temple of "Anahita", was converted to the mosque of Hinza located in the south west of the settlement. To the south of the settlement a mountain with the name "Momilan" is located, and on its peak which is about halfway between two of the forts, two columns have been constructed. The sighting through the columns determines the direction of "Qebleh" or qibla which can be observed from any location on the settlement. Thus all believers could pray anywhere in the village, always in the right orientation. In addition to this feature, the number of mosques and the current ceremonies demonstrate the seriousness of the people in embracing Islam as their overriding religion and most significant change.

At present there are twelve mosques or "Masjid" and five "Hosseinieh", in the entire settlement. During the Safavid period Islam in Abianeh reached its apogee. In those days there were two groups of "Sunni Ashary", and "Sufism" being practised side by side. The Sufi people were mostly located in the "Pakhongah" area of the settlement. In the area of "Khanegah" mentioned above, like Esfahani Sufis, they formed their own Khnegah in the area of Pakhongah, located in a house of type Chahar-Soffeh owned at one time by Mr. Mirzai Khanegahi. This house was an outstanding example



of its kind but was subjected to flooding and has since become derelict. The list of mosques and Hosseinieh can be summarised as follows: mosque of "Hodjateh", mosque of "Chehel angosht", mosque of "Pang Ali", mosque of "Cheshmeh Nakh", mosque of "Parzaleh", Emamzadeh do tan "Issa va Yahya", mosque of "Palizeh", mosque of "Hinza" (the shrine of BI Bi Zobeideh Khatoon), and "Hosseinieh Nakh Herdeh". These can be understood as among the existing outstanding elements of the settlement.

It is important to note that the people of Abianeh accepted the faith of Islam holistically, consciously and embraced its applications, customs and path to God without any complications, fixations or doubts. At the same time however, just as important and relevant to this subject of discourse, they believed in their own culture and ancient beliefs or superstitions inherited from ancient times. Thus all were amalgamated together to form their own version of ceremonies that harmonised the two streams in their own peculiar way.

### 4.7. The Month of Moharam

In the rituals of Islamic beliefs and gatherings, within the settlements and villages generally throughout Iran, the month of "Moharam" has a special significance. It is concerned with the raising of the people's spiritual unity in resurrecting the collective memory that is associated with the death of the third "imam", His Holiness, Imam Hussein (Peace be upon Him). In Abianeh this spiritual awakening is apparent from the first to the eighth day of Moharam. It is customary to mourn, "Azadari", and hold sermons, "Rozeh Khani", and morning prayers of lamentation. In every mosque following the Rozeh "Nohe" groups of mourners would travel from one



neighbourhood within the settlement to another. The groups would chant repetitious songs and phrases recalling the memories of the past and would inflict pain upon themselves with specially designed chains, "ZanjirZani", on their backs. This act of mourning by moving along a circuit and stopping from place to place was known as "Porseh Raftan". As the groups from different neighbourhoods met along the pathways or at each other's mosque, they demonstrated mutual respect and solidarity for the cause by increasing the rhythm of the songs and the beating of the chains on their backs, or "Sineh zani", the beating of hands on their chest. Such actions added to the excitement of the moment, lifting their spirits higher in an act of friendly competition, to such an extent that other passers-by and spectators would be absorbed in a trance-like condition.

From the ninth day of the holy month of Moharam the stage of "Tasua" begins, which is known by the name of "Abbase'Ali". The ceremonial morning usually follows a set procedure: - Before lunch the people of each "Mahal" or neighbourhood, assemble and organise themselves for mourning and marching. Throughout the settlement, the procession moves through the main streets and minor routes, once or twice depending on the pace of marching. Along their path houses are open for alms giving and have prayers and dedications dedicated to their forebears. Doorways are washed clean and carpets laid in doors while food is prepared for the "Dasteh", the group of marchers and mourners. Whoever stops there usually samples some food and moves on as departing guests. In return the group recites prayers and blesses the house and its occupiers. It is also a custom that in these two days the people of the settlement and the town elders visit each other as a sign of respect, especially those who have lost a loved one or are still in mourning following bereavement. During these two

days the people of the Yousman area have two ceremonies. One is the "Jeg Jeggeh zani" or "Porse Raftan" and the other, "Shaddeh Bandi".

The Jeg Jeggeh (Jack Jackeh) was two hollow sticks each nearly 7cm long and 6cm in width.

A pair of these would be placed in the palm of the hand with a ring attached to the end being held. The groups would then form two lines in a row, with their leaders holding the sticks together and setting a beat by striking the sticks together as they sang songs of mourning in perfect harmony and rhythm. By the time third precession reached the Ziaratgah, the beat would slow down and a state of high spiritualism or bliss would be established. The beating was in three parts: above the head, parallel to the face and when bowing. A translation of the passages approximates to the following:

*"O' thou Shia, come let your heart bleed for what you must see.*

*See the pain and hurt from these thirsty lips which are meant to be."*

(After picking up the beat, followed by)

*"Oh dear ones tonight is the night of death of faith,*

*Look at this desolate place,*

*The King of Karbala is coming,*

*On horse back or on foot,*

*They are all waiting with open arms,*

*Two thousand are in Affluence. And two thousand are under oath. "*

The second programme was "Shadeh Bardary" and followed "jeg jeggeh Zani", "Shadeh" is a sign or an icon which is mounted on a long spring metal plate fixed to a wooden base. It also has a horizontal piece, which is used to balance it on the floor. On top is mounted a "Torg" and a silk ribbon while it's the body would be covered with precious cloth. This "Shadeh" was always heavy and could be lifted up and carried around only by a very strong man, who in turn would be treated as a hero. The Shadeh would then be taken along while attended by a group of chanters and mourners. By tilting the end, bending the blade and bowing the Torg in a form of curtsy, he would be demonstrating the humility of the people and respect for the Imam.

The reality of the month of Moharam concerning the remembrance of Ashora is one of the most historical moments in the history of Islamic ceremonies. It is the belief of the Shia sect of Islam, that on the anniversary of the day Imam Hossein 9 (Peace be upon Him), was killed by Yazid the son of Moavieh (who thought himself the leader of the Moslems), the name of Hussein reverberates as the leader of the path to freedom. Over one thousand years later, this event for Imam Hussein, his followers and family, is held throughout the Islamic world.

Abbas the son of Ali ibn Abitalib (peace be upon him), the brother of Imam Hussein (Peace be upon Him), died on the same day of Tasua or the 9th day of the month of Moharam in the war involving Imam Hussein (Peace be upon him). It is usual that on this day he is also mourned.



### 4.8. Nakhl Bardari

“Nakhl” or “Nakheel” is a word widely used in the Islamic nation. Essentially it means the date palm. In Abianeh it is referred to as a large “Gamat”, or a framed alter, which is made of timber and decorated with silk or other precious materials, and mirrors, lamps, flowers and greenery. On the day of Ashora, it would be taken out to where the ceremonies were being held.

These Nakhls are so heavy that it takes ten strong men to lift it. This heavy coffin-like structure would also have fixed to it various daggers, spears and shields and other weapons of war. In the day of Ashora it would be the realisation of the coffin of Imam Hussein (PBUH.) Hence it was ‘covered with blessings’ and decorated with materials fit for a king and given arms as if to protect it from all harm, by defending itself. As the object shared the imagery of the palm tree, it became known as the Nakhl.

Occasionally in Abianeh, if a devout person died, a coffin which resembled the Nakhl, might be made for him.

The tradition of the Nakhl Bardari is an old one which is linked to other people as well such as “Sandog Davood Nabby” or the coffin of “Siavosh” and, of course, the coffin of Imam Hussein (PBUH). This was a custom carried out in most cities and towns. In other parts of Iran, the idea of Nakhl is used in connection with the death of the third Imam of the Shia sect. However in Abianeh this has also taken on a different shape.

The Nakhl was borne on eight legs, two of which were along the width with six along the length. It had shoulder-pieces which projected outwards for about half a metre

along the same location as the legs. Each leg of the Nakhl was customarily paid for by a notable family in the settlement who regarded it as an honour to have the leg supported by a member of their family. Every year also, one family would be chosen who would nominate a member on top directing the Nakheel - also considered to be a great honour?

There are two Nakhls in existence in Abianeh. One is in the "Hosseinieh" and belongs to Mahaleh paeen, the older part of the settlement; the other is in the Pal and Yosman area of the settlement and is retained in the Hosseinieh of Pal. The person who is appointed the keeper of the Nakhl, and is responsible for decorating it and having it ready for Ashura, is known as "Babayeh Nakhl" or the father of the Nakhl. He would remain nearby during the annual ceremonies until the eve of Tasua, when it would be returned, then safely stored for the succeeding year.

The Nakheel would be taken around the settlement and the route would have about twenty stops. The stops would include various people's houses along the way at which point the inhabitants would bestow favours and alms called "Dein" - as if a debt to be paid to the Imam.

It is interesting to note that since this ceremony began, the women of the settlement have established their own custom of using the Nakhl as a healing or religious icon, bestowing funds and precious items, which could be used by the Babayeh Nakheel for charity. This was believed to avert evil and bad health in the village and protect the families.



Peoples of Iran

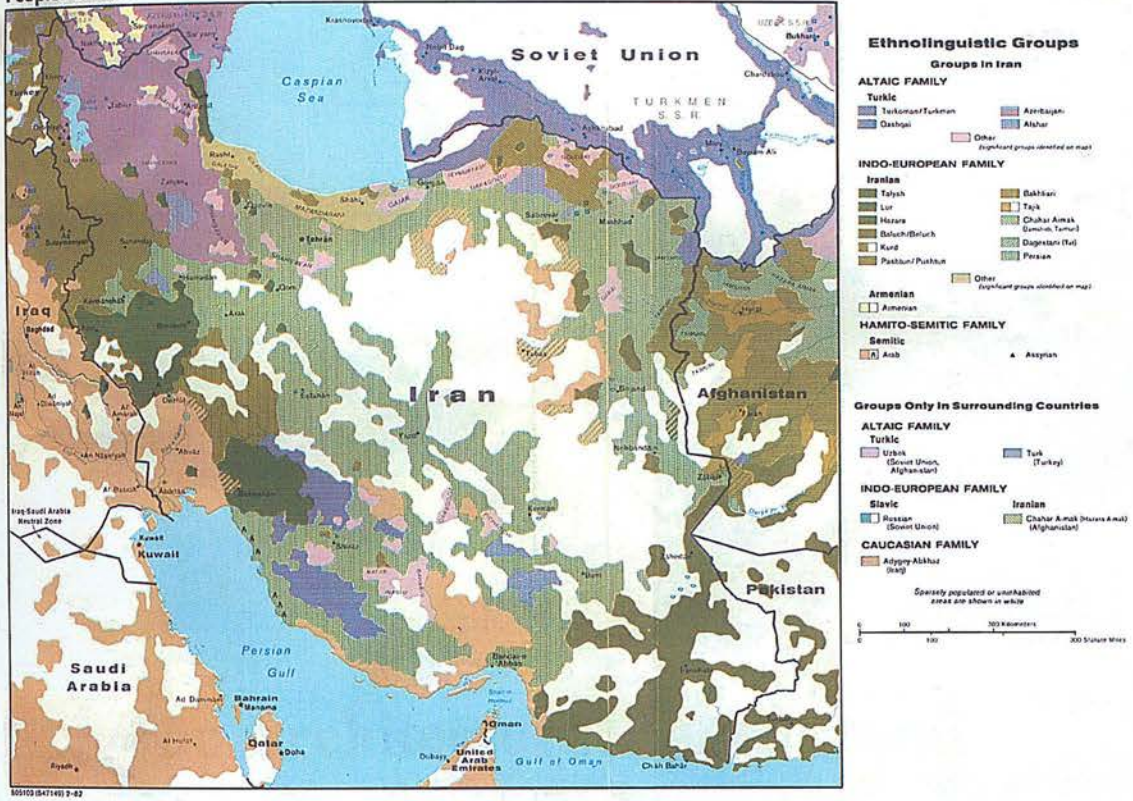


Figure 122: Ethno linguistic groups of Iran

This is consistent with old Iranian customs called “Nazr”<sup>13</sup> and “Vagf”.<sup>14</sup> This in essence is a basic teaching of Islam where believers should be charitable and give to the needy, exemplifying the way of God through his prophets.

<sup>13</sup> Nazar: That deed which is given for something to come true, a wish. Dictionary of Dehkhoda, vol.13, p.19805.

<sup>14</sup> Vagf: To give a proportion of income or alms “in the way of God” for charity. Dictionary of Dehkhoda vol.14, p.20535.



Chapter Five:

**The Architectural and Natural  
Phenomena**

## Chapter Five: Architectural and Natural Phenomena

### Introduction

This section looks at the architectural and the natural phenomena of the settlement with specific attention to its unique typology and details of all aspects of the built environment.

Architectural and building construction in the town planning context;

### Architectural and Natural Phenomena -

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## 5.1 Architectural and Building Construction in the Town Planning Context

The inherent parameters of design of the urban form and some of the characteristics specific, to the settlement, can be summarised as follows: -

- 1) The inter-linked and compressed "hetrotopic"<sup>1</sup> form of the settlement as a whole.
- 2) The manipulation of the natural falls and flat lands within the mountains.
- 3) The spacing of buildings and general overall proportions being consistent throughout the settlement.
- 4) The segregation of the winter rooms to the South and summer rooms to the North.
  - a. The grouping of buildings is such that the majority of the single storey buildings are to the North and multi-storeys to the South.
- 5) The imaginative use of windows and their varieties to suit their purpose, privacy and special segregation.
- 6) The proportion of windows in relation to their purpose such as daylight and air circulation
- 7) The use of geometric proportions of 1:1.5 and 1:1.7 in their rectangular forms as a consistent width to breadth proportion.

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<sup>1</sup> Dimitri Porphyrios, Sources of modern eclecticism.pp18.25.

- 8) The direction of the buildings within a 25 degree variation, spanning from south-east to south west., with their backs to the mountain while facing the valley beyond.
- 9) The use of blinds to the south facades of the buildings.
- 10) Flat roofs.
- 11) Sunken basements and their intertwining structures with neighbouring buildings.
- 12) Climatic changes and its impact on the buildings
- 13) Entrances positioned mostly on south facing facades.
- 14) Compensation for wind and direction of the sun, for ventilation and warmth.

### 5.2 Discipline and typological analyses

It is through Typological analyses that the generic background to the development of the house types can be better understood. In order to map the organic growth of the settlement we must first understand the reasons behind the built settlement and then dissect it in order to differentiate between separate dwellings and their intended purpose, and extension and development throughout the settlement.

It was around the end of the eighteenth century and the beginning of the nineteenth century in France when an important turning point in the history of architectural discourse was established. This was a time when the very basis of what had given meaning to works of art until then was now being threatened. An important figure who had previously struggled to prevent such a movement was a theoretician by the name of Antoine Chrysostome Quatremere de Quincy (1755-1849).

His influence as one of the major theoreticians of Architecture has marked the ultimate struggle in the revival of the question concerning whether perhaps it would have been possible to retain some kind of idealistic values of previous civilisations. Through his study of the notion of 'type', Quatremerede de Quincy gave back an aura and metaphysical status to the work of art which until then was subjected to the scrutiny of all sceptics.

Since then, the theory of typology has been revived time and again. Some recent names involved are Guilo Carlo Argan, Aldo Rossi, the brother Kriers etc., who have used it as a design tool. In the words of Alan Colquhoun:-

**" .. the possibility of real communication between architects and society is not necessary precluded by the idea of type, it is through the concept of type that the process of communication is made possible"<sup>2</sup>.**

Quatremerede looked at the absolute truth behind the work of art and tried to establish a norm by means of which architecture could be made teachable. The laws of idealistic imitation, the ideas of good and bad work of art and their classification, and what could be the true work of art, founded the fundamental basis of his work:

**" ... good design is founded on Aristotelian principles of order, symmetry, harmony and proportion rationally formulated on the basis of particular examples comprehended through the senses"<sup>3</sup>.**

And on architecture and its relationship with nature and imitation in the fine arts Quatremerede states:-

**" ..if architecture is an art of imitation, it is so not because it has conserved-while embellishing the coarse forms which need bestowed upon the first dwellings**

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<sup>2</sup> R. Manco quoting Alan Colquhoun "on typology" *Oppositions* 13, 1978.

<sup>3</sup> D.D. Egbert, "The Beaux-Arts tradition in French Architecture", p. 100.



during the childhood of society, but because it imitates the very laws which govern nature itself"<sup>4</sup>.

Quatremere therefore distinguished very clearly between Type and Model or "Form":

**"..in every art there must be, with respect to truth, some fiction and with respect to resemblance, something incomplete"**<sup>5</sup>.

It is this incompleteness of the work of art which determines the "Type" - as opposed to the form or the Model which is the complete and realised version of the type. In other words Type is loose and undetermined and floats as an idea in the mind, or the work of art of what the object needs or is going to be, not fully realised in its perfection. In fact no true work of art he believed could ever be completed:

**"..it is the fictions and (the) incomplete in every art and those alone which constitute art and become moreover the sources of the pleasure of imitation"**<sup>6</sup>.

Collectively through his understanding of fiction, perfection, illusion, genius, model, image, different classifications and ordering of the importance of work of art, idea and ideal nature and art, and so on, Quatremere developed the essential strength in his theory of Typology and what gave it an archetypal base of understanding the arts for the first time.

It was an age in which the example of Newton's work in science, Locke's work in philosophy and Rousseau's work in anthropology were each tantamount to the way the shelter, as the first mark or type of habitation, was the source of simple natural principles of architecture. In recalling Vitruvius, who must be regarded as the source

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<sup>4</sup> Quatremere de Quincy "Dictionnaire Historique d'Architecture", Paris 1832, quoted in D, Porphyrios "sources of Modern Eclectism".p.13.

<sup>5</sup> Quatremere de Quincy-"Essay on the nature, the end and means of imitation in the fine arts" p.121.

<sup>6</sup> Ibid.

of all the later speculation about the primitive hut. he wrote at the time of Augustus and gave a circumstantial account of the origins of the arts, especially architecture:

**... Since the invention of fire brought about the congress of men and their counsel together and cohabitation and since many people now met in one place, and since they could make whatever they wished with their hands and fingers easily, some of what company began to make roofs of leaves, others to dig hollows under the hills, yet others made places for shelter, in imitation of the nests and buildings of swallows out of mud and wattle....<sup>7</sup>.**

Vidler, reflecting on Quatremere's ideas, states:

**"I mean by the word 'Type' the first attempts of man to master nature, render it propitious to his needs, equitable to his uses and favourable to his pleasures. The perceptible objects that the artist chooses with justness and reasoning from nature in order to light and fix at the same time the first of his imagination, I call Archetype.<sup>8</sup>**

In this way Type and Archetype were separated, one being the realisation of the other in its absolute presentation and form.

The researcher therefore suggests that in fact Abianeh is a type in its ordering sensibilities and a state of being, not yet fully realised in perfection, but therein lies its essential characteristics. A mere suggestion of Laugier's (1753) mud buildings and Quatremere's archetype are presented here to further emphasize the idea of type into an ideal of dwelling. This is represented in its macrocosm as a settlement unique in its typological form and presents to us a series of realised forms of dwellings, which have

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<sup>7</sup> *Vitruvius on Architecture*, edited and translated by Frank Granger, London 1931, quoted in J. Rykwert, "On Adam's House in Paradise".

<sup>8</sup> Archetype is the first manifestation of a germ giving rise to the inception of an idea which then gets to be developed further into a Type and thereafter a form which is then realised and can be copied in its absolute perfection. An Archetype is vague whereas a Type is fully realised in its essential characteristics but not quite completed and realised.

evolved through time and have changed to suit their environment and the inhabitants' needs.

The evolution of the settlement from a single cell type to its most complex dwellings such as the fire temple of Harpack is a living example of the way the forms multiplied and were integrated with the environment and the neighbourhood. In its absolute and purest form, almost unrealised and yet living. Abianeh presents to us a typology of integrated forms and function, which is unique and extremely beautiful due to their incompleteness and vague nature, as indeed Quatremerede suggests, works of art should be. It is also taste and people, in the word of Boullée:

**Taste is a fine, delicate discernment of objects which are connected with our pleasure. It is not enough to show us objects of our pleasures; it is by choice that they are stimulated within us and that ... ravishes all our hearts.<sup>9</sup>**

Therefore it also is directed towards the people, their individuality and personal taste and intelligence, which elevate this settlement and its character into the exemplar of works of Architecture in existence.

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<sup>9</sup> Etienne .Lowis.Boullée, "E.ssai Sur l'Art", translated by H.Rosenau,(n.d.).p.43.



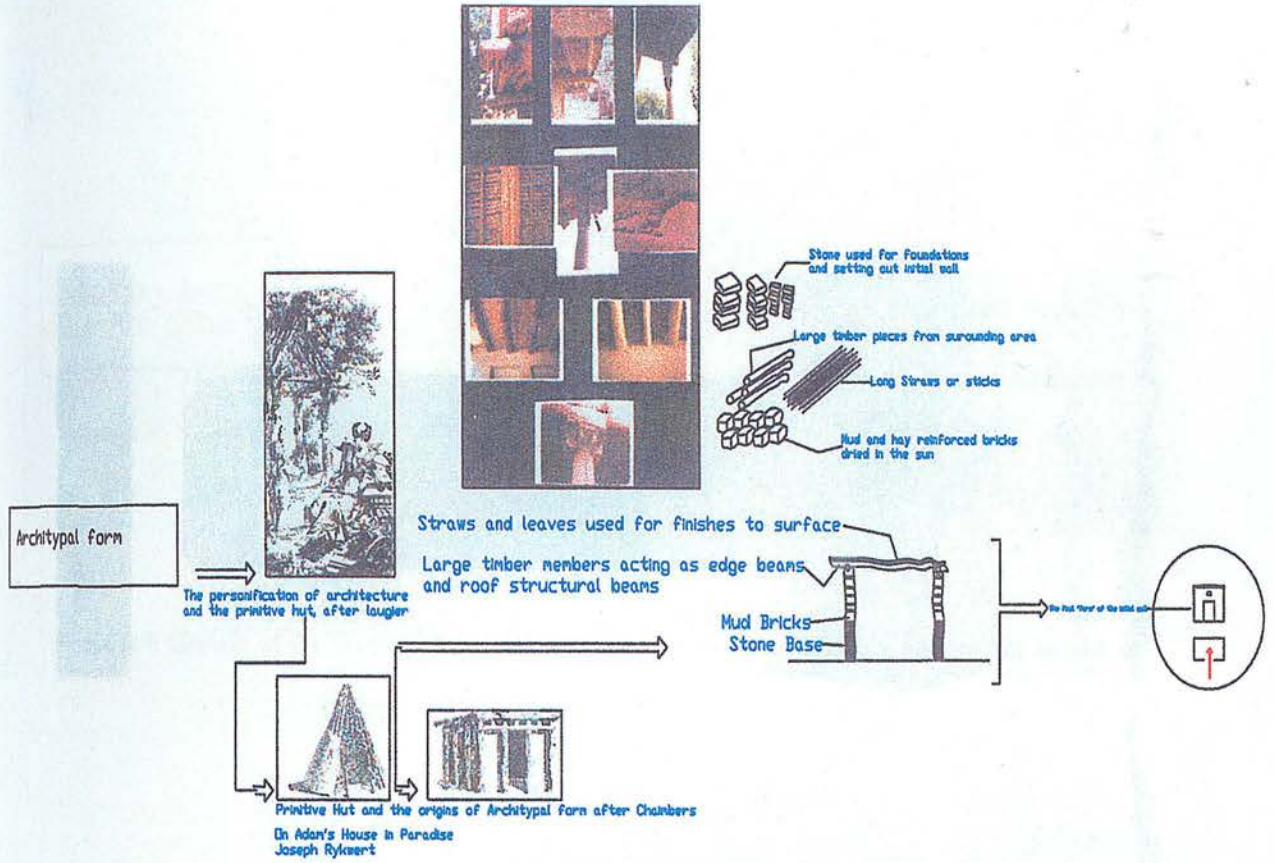


Figure 123: The archetypal ascendancy of the primitive hut "idea" into the "Ideal" of a single cell unit of dwelling in Abianeh



Figure 124: Single cell unit still inhabited." The first type of Dwelling in Abianeh".

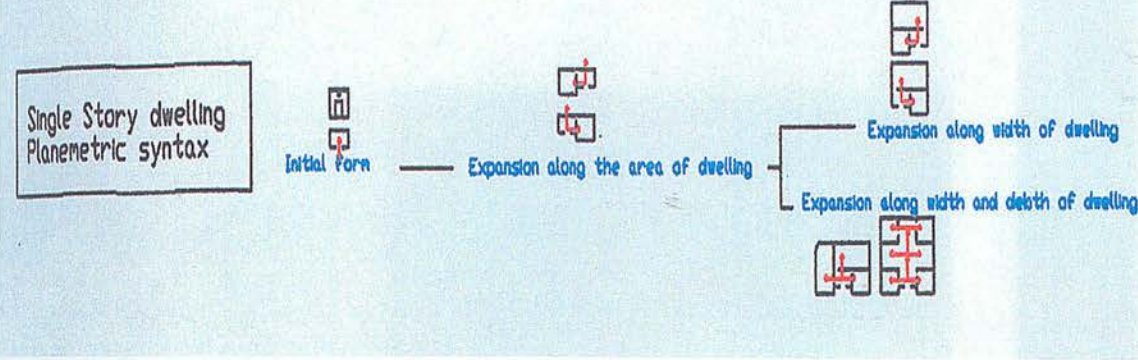


Figure 125: Growth of the Single cell unit along the contours of the hill side and up the mountain laterally.

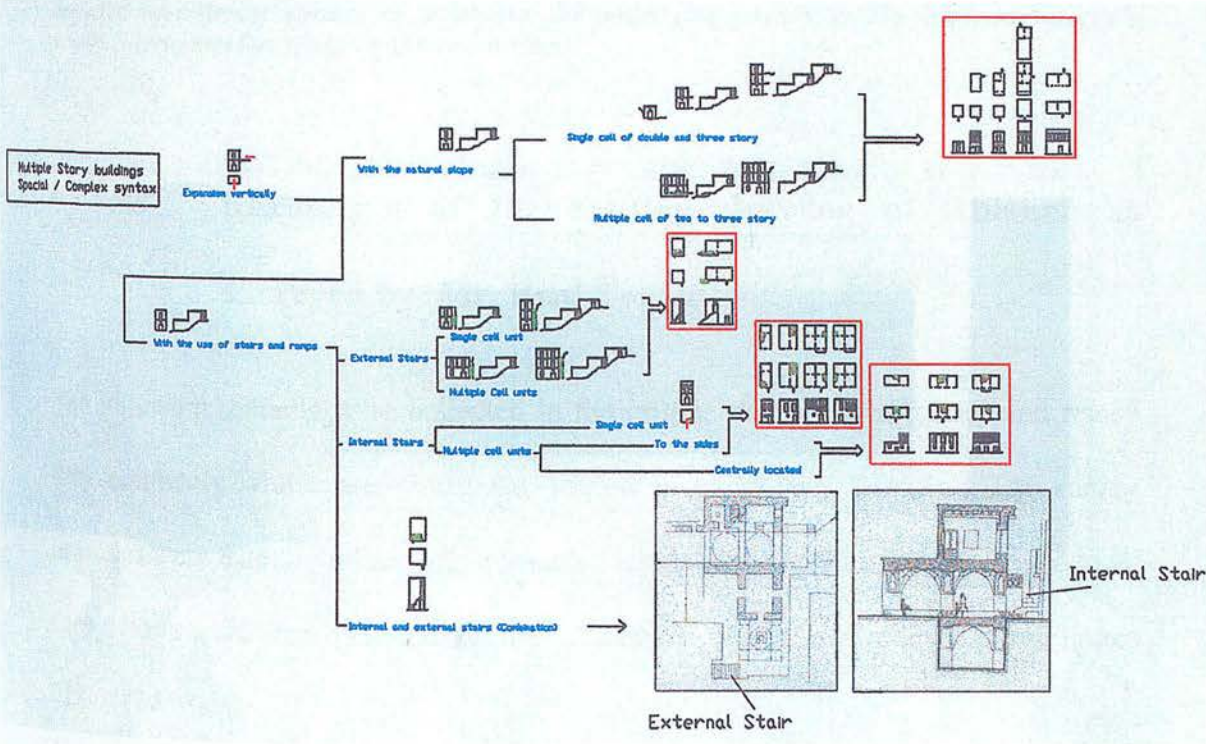


Figure 126: Growth of the settlement multi-dimensionally by the use of falls and by excavating the top soil areas of the mountain side, laterally and vertically.



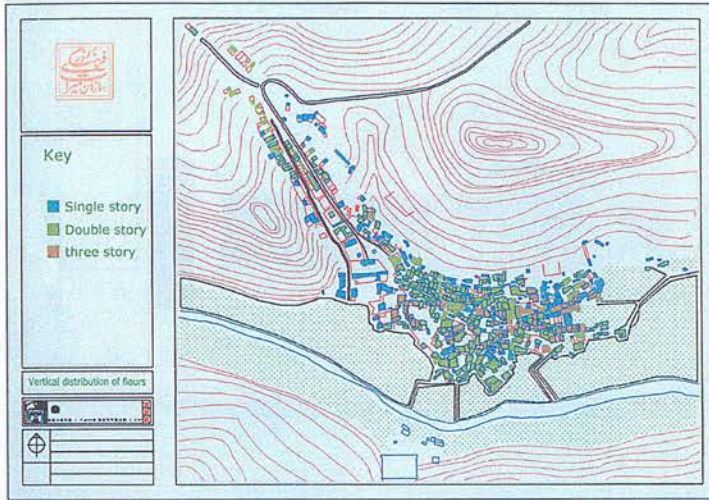


Figure 127: The realised settlement today as existing. Plan derived from aerial photography, digitised and converted to a scaled plan. The buildings and their density are surveyed and depicted by different colours to determine the underlying pattern in the infrastructure as a whole. Survey and Drawings by the researcher.

### 5.3 Realisation of the existing drawing of Abianeh as surveyed by 'Mr. Ben'.<sup>10</sup>

The following sections were collected in the original hand-drawn format and traced very accurately whilst preserving the original work of Mr. Ben.(f.n). The survey drawings were then digitalised and converted into AutoCAD. These were rotated to fit each other's indifferent permutation until the actual pattern was realised. See Figures 128 to 134 below.

<sup>10</sup> Mr.Ben's true identity has not been established by the National Heritage agency. It is believed that after the invitation by Princes Farah Diba "The Wife of the Shah of Iran" and his commission, he became resident in Abianeh for about three to four years, living there with his family. Before the beginning of the 1979 Revolution he left Iran and all his work and records of his existence have either been removed, or completely lost, other than the above extant pencil sketches found by the researcher.



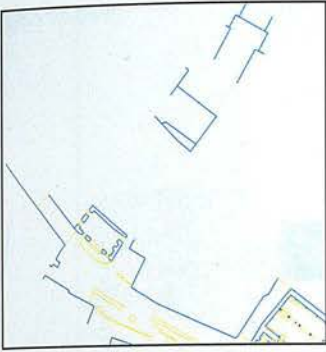


Figure 128.

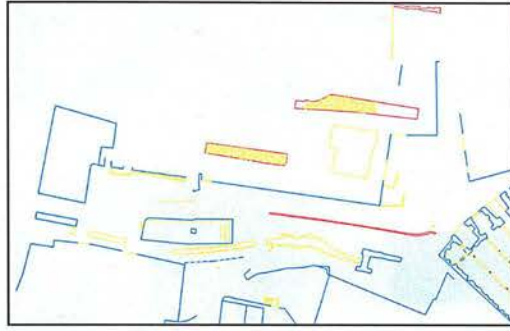


Figure 129

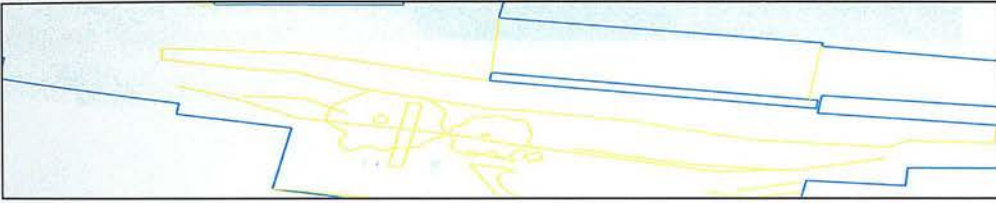


Figure 130

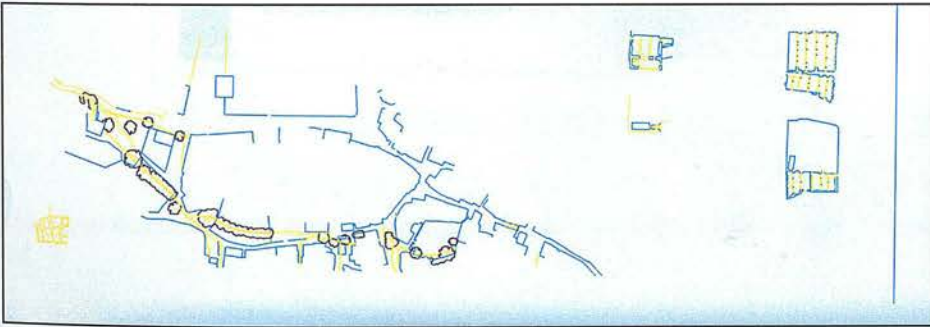


Figure 131

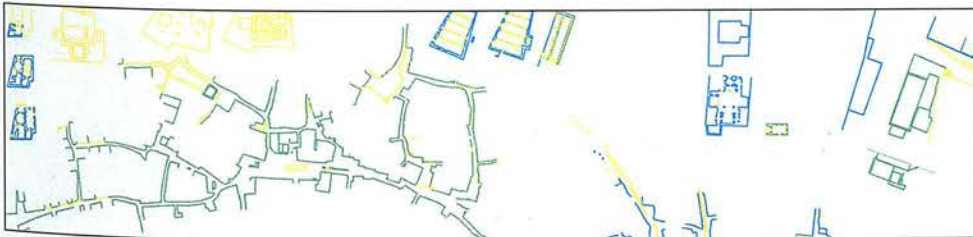


Figure 132

Figures 128 – 132 : Pieces of the 'jigsaw puzzle'

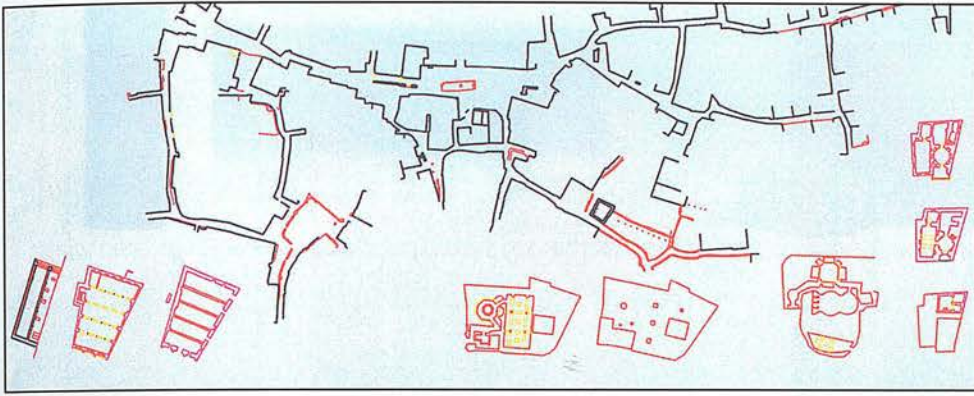


Figure 133: The location of the most prominent building types were found to be along the main route through the settlement.<sup>11</sup>

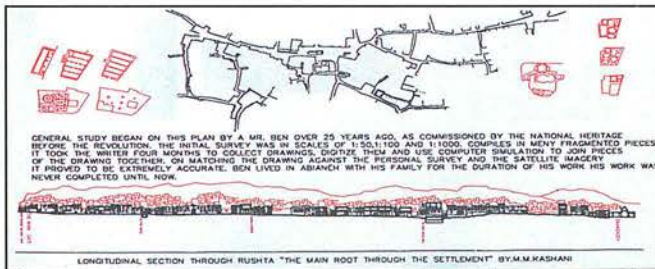


Figure 134: Final formulation of Ben's drawings and a cross-section by the researcher across the settlement.

<sup>11</sup> The only extant survey executed 25 years ago by "Mr. Ben" who lived and worked in Abianeh under the instructions and commission of the Royal family and the National Heritage authority. All his work covered about one percent of the total area of the settlement. The rest was completed by the researcher and presented to National Heritage of Iran.



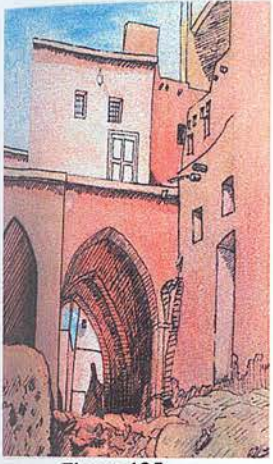


Figure 135



Figure 136

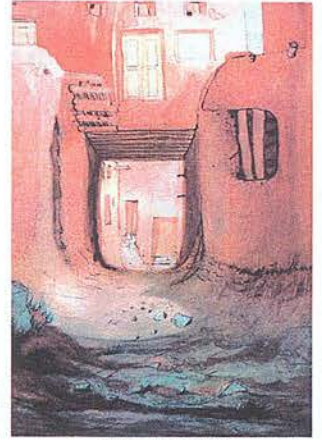


Figure 137

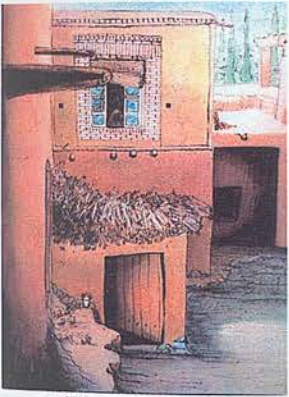


Figure 138



Figure 139

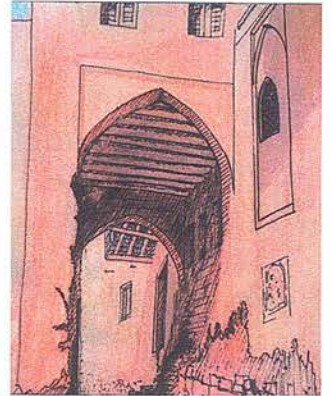


Figure 140



Figure 141



Figure 142

Figures 135-142: The magnificent, complex building types, inter-linked and working together to support a unity which is strongly reflected in all that happens within the settlement and its people. Paintings in water-colour by the researcher intended to capture the character of the spaces in terms of their antiquity and quiet dignity.



The researcher's new surveys and drawings are intended as an accurate record of the existing fabric for reference and use as examples of true types unique to Abianeh. In turn these serve as a model for any restoration and revitalisation programme. The house of "Hakeem" is as an example:

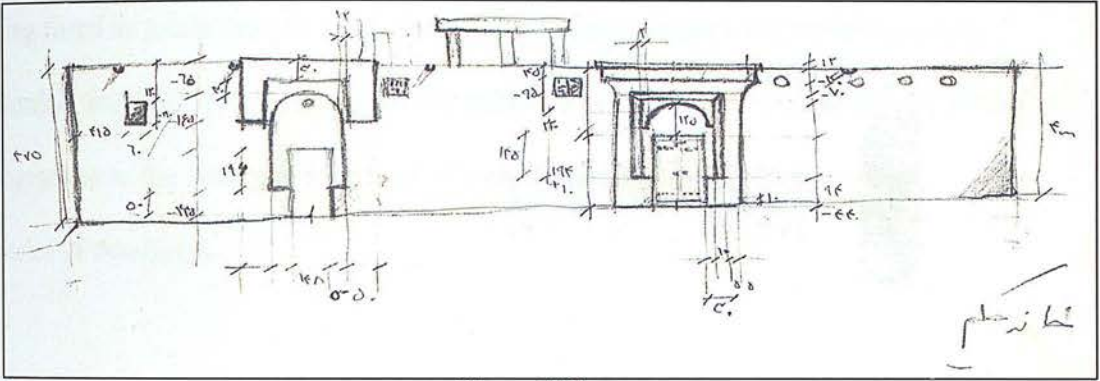


Figure 143

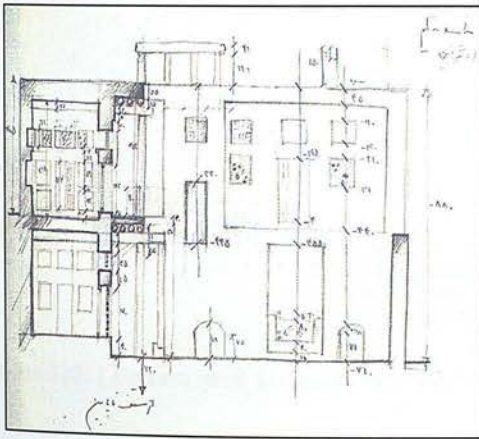


Figure 144

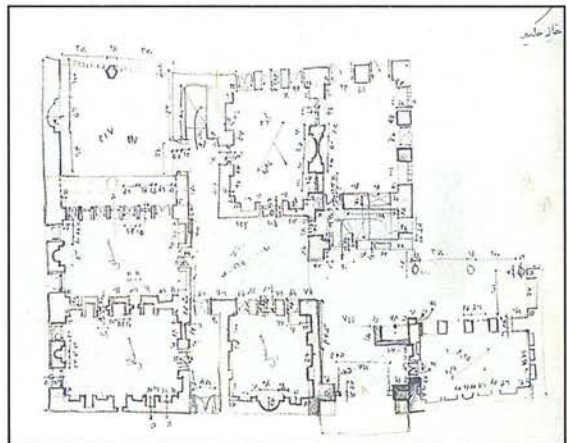


Figure 145

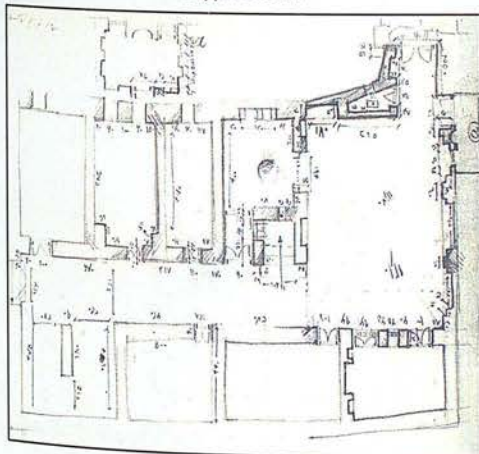


Figure 146

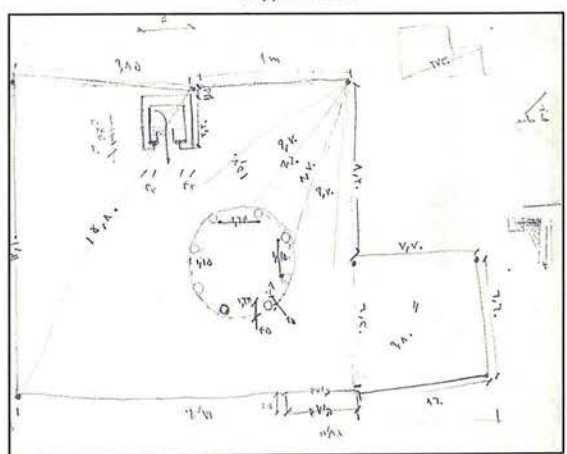


Figure 147

Figures 143-147: Sketches of the house of Hakeem, one of about 50 house types selected for preservation.

The house of Hakim or Hakeem is one of the most prominent houses in the style of Chahar-Sofeh, Daroongara or "Inward looking" - a style contradictory to Abianeh's true character of Biroongara or "Outward looking".

The location key below was used in the main presentation to the National Heritage authority on every drawing, intended to pinpoint all prominent houses in need of being listed as grade one. In total, some fifty of these houses were surveyed and recorded, and their detail submitted for restoration as part of a suggested revitalisation programme to the National Heritage of Iran - all being unique types and different species of dwellings.



Figure 148: Location map for every building of relevance. Drawing by the researcher.

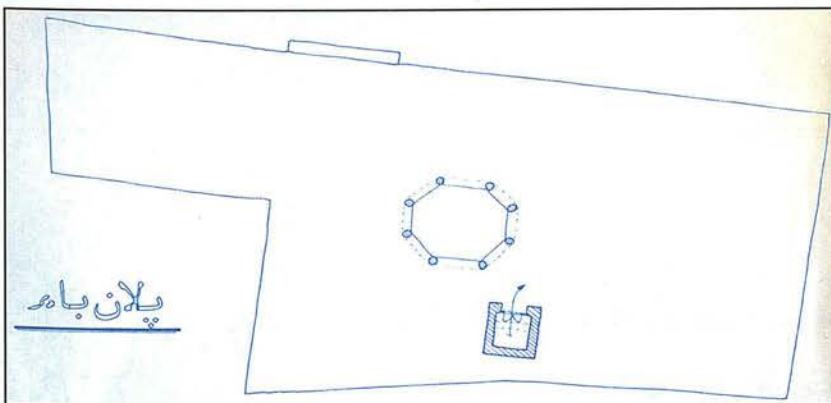


Figure 149: Roof Plan

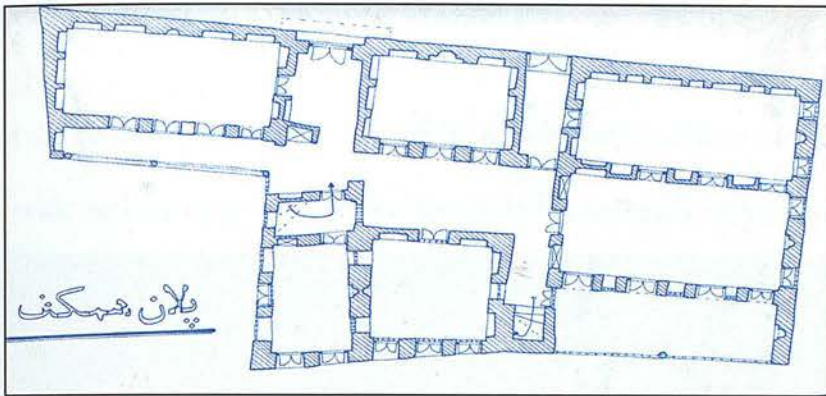


Figure 150: Ground floor Plan

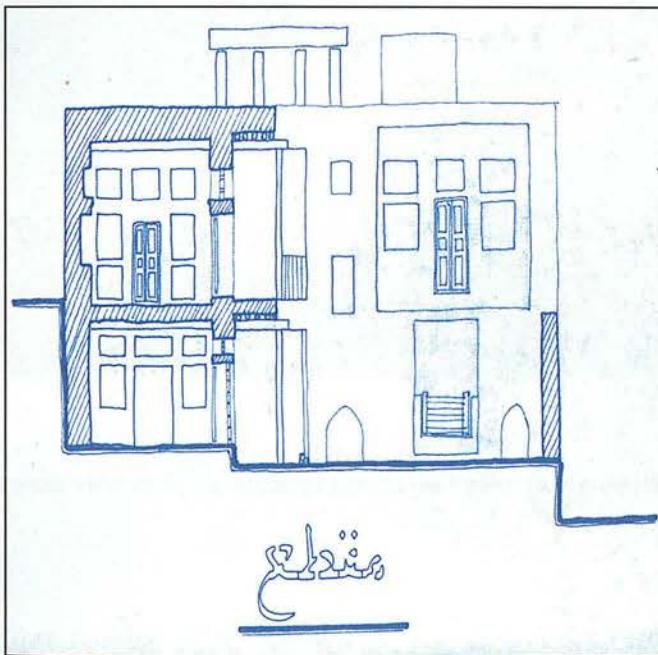


Figure 151: Section thro' the Building

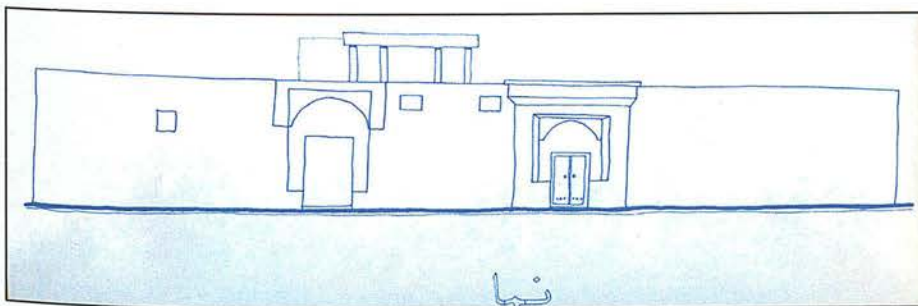


Figure 152: Front Elevation to the main Rashteh or Rasteh, the main route through the settlement.



## 5.4 The Natural phenomenon of the settlement and specificity of the urbanism

The shape of the settlement blends well with its natural surroundings of mountain and hills, in line with the boundary of the river, the orchards and their inter-linked routes.

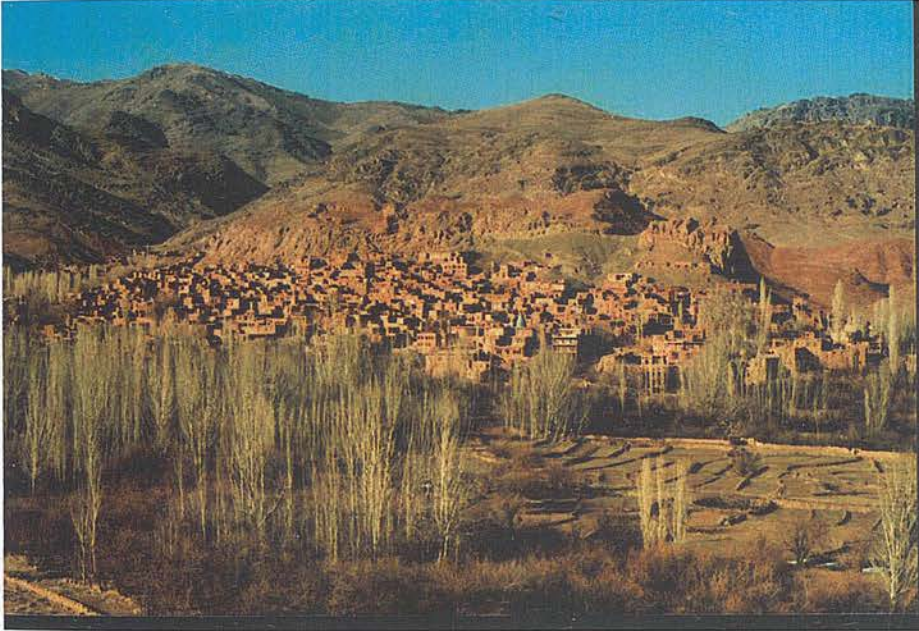


Figure 153: Panoramic view of the settlement across the valley in late autumn.

The main route through the village known as “Rashta”<sup>12</sup> is in line with the old route to Kashan,<sup>13</sup> and Natanz,<sup>14</sup> through to Meymeh<sup>15</sup> and finally Isfahan<sup>16</sup>.

<sup>12</sup> Rashta or Rasteh is the main route through the settlement, equivalent to a high street.

<sup>13</sup> Kashan is about 20 km away from Abianeh on the main Silk Road.

<sup>14</sup> Natanz is also a city further away than Kashan and has deep trading routes with Abianeh

<sup>15</sup> Meymeh is a village previously noted for trading along the Silk Road.

<sup>16</sup> Isfahan was the capital city of Iran during the Safavid dynasty.

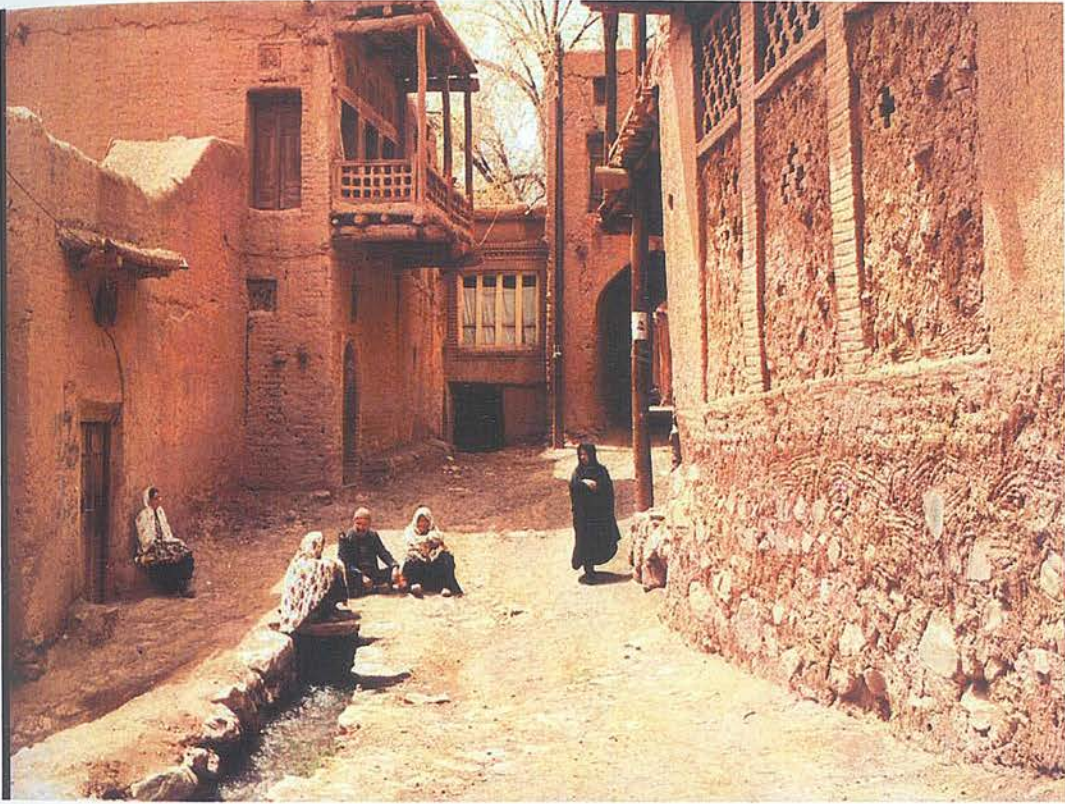
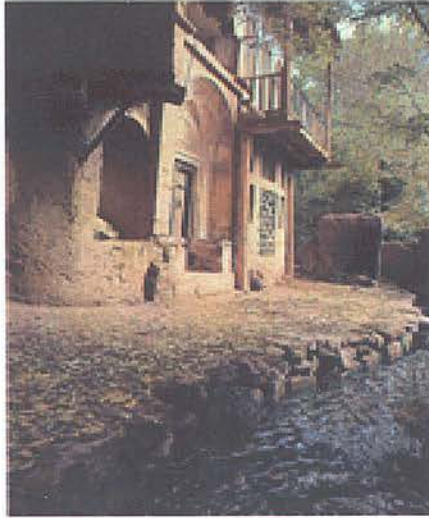


Figure 154: View of the central region of Abianeh along the route of Rasta or Rashteh "the main road through the settlement" - between the main Abanbar "Water well" and the "Ziaratgah". View looking west.

The "Rashteh" serves as the main axis through the settlement and is located in the most prominent part of the village connecting all the other secondary routes. Forming a main artery through the settlement, it is well integrated with all the parts of the settlement and, along its sides, are located the most important public and private houses and institutional buildings within the settlement - a zoning characteristic well known in town planning.



Along the same route a natural spring runs in parallel to it in the form of an open drainage system known as “Joob”<sup>17</sup>, which in turn, feeds the wells and branches in two directions, ending up in the allotments and orchards and fields beyond. The water flows through the main Rashteh adjacent to the main gate, through to Abanbar, under the route to Ziaratgah and then over to the lower section of the settlement.



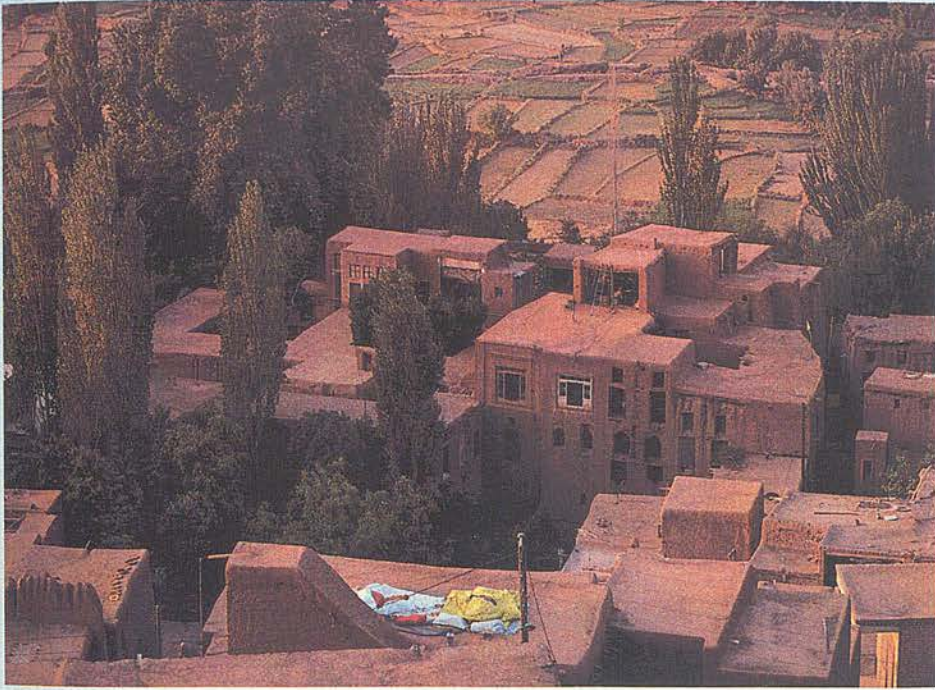
**Figure155: The ever-running stream through the settlement**

Along the route leading to the mountain, districts, neighbourhoods and gardens, the water forms a unique spinal cord linking the settlement through its nurturing and feeding before finally leading to the main agricultural lands beyond to the east and west of the settlement. Adjacent to the natural valley these provide the inhabitants with the best arable land in the region.

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<sup>17</sup> Joob is traditional surface water dispersal and distribution system in Iran. It is widely used for irrigation and for domestic disposal.





77 - Abyāneh, Kāshān

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Figure 156: The edge of gardens and housing in the lower part of the settlement to the south "Herdah". Note the bedding on the roof in the foreground for people sleeping during the warmer months.

The main route branches into a network of lanes, underpasses, alleys and paths, by negotiating every corner of the settlement, seemingly at every turn, while rising and falling with the natural topography of the land. This leads the visitor to every corner of the settlement before dividing and converging as public and private spaces, but never terminating in a dead end - another important characteristic of the settlement.

## 5.5 The Influence of the Natural Environment on the Settlement

The factors which most affect the sustainability of life and the deciding elements of design, in the built environment of Abianeh can be summarised as:

- 15) The development of the settlement along the natural falls and topography of the land.
- 16) The development of life around water and the use of the sun, independent of shade.
- 17) The articulated segregation of the mountain, frames and orchards and the built- up areas.
- 18) The creation of an edge to what is contained within the settlement by means of walled gardens merging into houses as these elements approach the heart of the settlement.
- 19) The development of the routes through the settlement and their natural co-ordination with the topography
- 20) The anchoring of the houses into the mountainside and the use of hard surfaces to form a natural foundation.
- 21) Fenestration and its specific southern orientation, to exploit the best use of daylight.
- 22) The use of natural falls for surface drainage and watering systems.
- 23) The use of perforated windows to exploit southerly winds.
- 24) The use of flat roofs to benefit from the sun and as working platforms for drying fruit, herbs, and vegetables, and in winter use as resting spaces.
- 25) The restriction of vegetation from the housing areas to avoid organic growth, especially routes growing through to their dwellings.



- 26) The use of mountain stones and other hard materials for grinding cereals in the mills, for crushing herbs, or even as hinges to doors etc.
- 27) The use of local timber, hay, clay and stone, for various building trades thereby harmonising the natural surroundings within a finite system.
- 28) The use of hydropower to run the mills.  
  
The use of natural materials for fuel such as animal fat, dung and timber for fuel - used in lamps, *Korsi*,<sup>18</sup> for cooking and for heating the public baths respectively<sup>19</sup>.
- 29) The use of wild herbs and spices, from the hills and valleys around the settlement, for medicinal purposes.
- 30) Living at high altitude with regular seasonal changes.

## 5.6 The Geometrical and Proportional Values of the Architecture

In most of the villages in this vicinity one can observe a discipline common to them all. This phenomenon concerns the geometrical relationship of the settlements, their building environments and the use of natural materials, all which help characterise their generic background and development.

The natural materials used, namely tree trunks, sticks, flat timber boarding, stone, clay, hay and straw of different kinds, together with the developed mud, sun dried bricks, have to a great extent determined the load-bearing elements of most building

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<sup>18</sup> *Korsi* is a winter heating instrument comprising of a round metal container, filled with specially made cow dung rolled into a ball shape, roughly the size of a tennis ball, and buried in ashes mixed with live burning charcoal. This is then placed in the middle of a rectangular frame some 80cm off the floor and supported on four legs. It is then covered with a large duvet cover made from substantial stuffed cotton with a patterned covering. This form of heating is still used in many parts of Iran.

<sup>19</sup> It should be noted that nowadays the heating is by mains electricity and oil or paraffin heaters. The public baths are run by paraffin boilers or *Mazoot*, a form of crude oil.

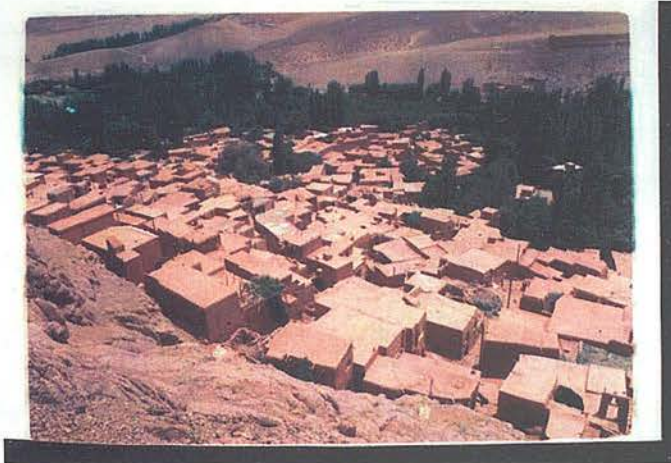


types, especially the spans and openings, the cantilevering and columns, walls and foundations.



**Figure 157:** Building geometry and proportion. Mr. Khansari and Mr. Karim dating the dwellings with the researcher. General walk throughout the settlement. Visual survey.

In addition, the architectural design is such that certain materials are almost used in a fluid manner: plaster is moulded around individual needs and desires. Similarly, the laws inherent to their culture and associations with the neighbourhood and community echo a respect and identity.



**Figure 158**

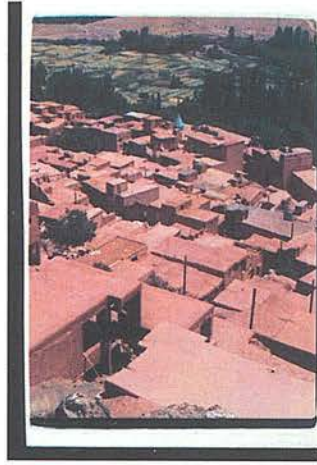


Figure 159

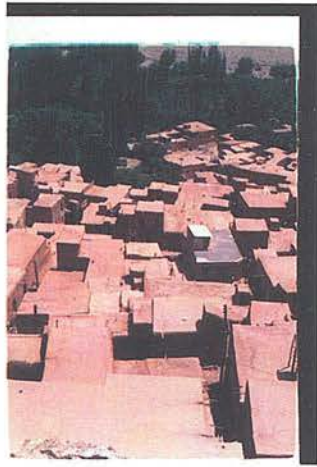
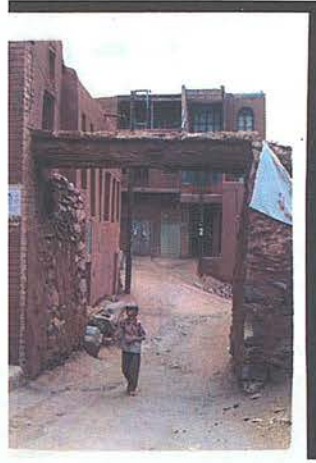


Figure 160

The fluidity of form around the hillside (Panoramic View). Figures 158-160 demonstrate the roof forms as an inexhaustible landscape of habitation.

The entrances and the general size of dwellings are somewhat short and this is expressed in the heights of doorways and low lintels, resulting in doors much shorter and wider in proportion to their vertical facades. This almost accentuates the entrance space on crossing the threshold by bending down to enter the dwelling and then by raising the head to appreciate the space beyond. This in turn is neatly and functionally determined with minimal circulation space and well articulated living spaces, especially those examples in the more developed house types.



**Figure 161: Entrance doors. The old main gate still retains its main features**

The external walls play an interesting public and functional role. From one side they express the structure of the building. On the inside they facilitate niches and storage spaces within them. On the outside they embrace entrances and public seating, and reveal all the significant elements to the building as a whole. The result is a holistic fusion of a most perfect expression of a built environment and its relationship with its community and nature.



**Figure 162: External walls as the settlements public elements. The mosque of Miandeh. Integration of buildings and street-life.**



The location of the windows and their geometry within the façade is invariably symmetrical, harmonious and balanced, as demonstrated by equal width of reveals and openings, window separation, floor to ceiling heights, and lintel to ceiling heights. All maintain a consistency throughout the settlement in every dwelling in accordance with the individual dwelling requirements, almost different in every case, but yet balanced throughout.

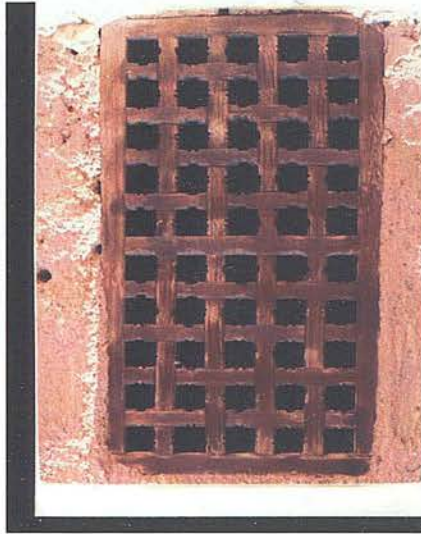


Figure 163: One of the original window types of Abianeh to the ground floor Akhor or Storage space. (Stables and Storage window).

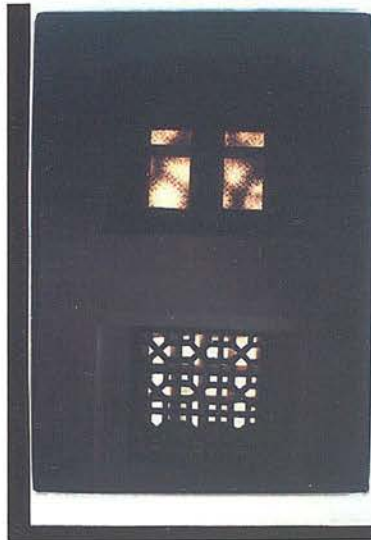


Figure 164: Window types. Light and its intrusion into the rooms are controlled by the depth of the windows and size of openings. As a rule, the closer to the ground floor and on the ground floor itself, the windows are mostly made of bricks or timber closely knitted to protect against intrusion and to allow ventilation and small amounts of light.

The building forms are rectangular box-like dwellings based on single cell shapes, which multiply and expand in a seemingly molecular, cellular way, as multiples of the single cell. Fused together, the cells become functional in their context and as patterns that form when they are realised in their final function, whether a mosque or a house.



Figure 165: Single cell unit still inhabited. The first type of dwelling in Abianeh.

In cases where the site is not a perfect square or rectangle, the cell is allowed to blend in and become a trapezium. However the overall character<sup>20</sup> and style <sup>21</sup> remain the same.

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<sup>20</sup> Character of the building refers to its overall design and how it represents itself in its syntactic and visual format.

<sup>21</sup> By style here the researcher is referring to the overall design of the form and its construction, dressing the units in one harmonious shape and form.

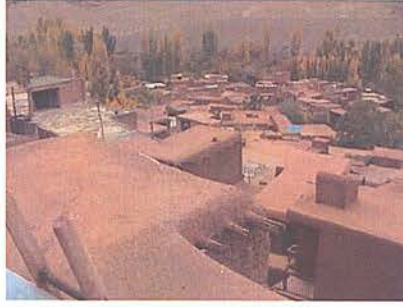


Figure 166: Aerial, Plano-metric view of the roof tops. The soft and traditional edges of the traditional buildings cascade down the valley in a stepped formation, in perfect harmony.

The properties are invariably designed and expanded in accordance with the family structure of father son and grandparents, then further expanded and extended naturally over time, while based on their needs and neighbourhood laws<sup>22</sup> and social norms that existed here.

The roof structure is essentially made of tree trunks as “beams” spaced in such a way as to counterbalance the topside construction and the dead and live loads imposed on it. The spacing of the main beams is about 60 to 70cm. apart. The construction of the walls is such that internally they allow for “Tagcheh” or niches forming a dead window, shaped internally with a well recessed sill to provide a surface for the family icons and objects of day to day needs, such as lamps and mirrors, books, and so on. Externally the same niches at lower level provide passers-by with convenient seating.

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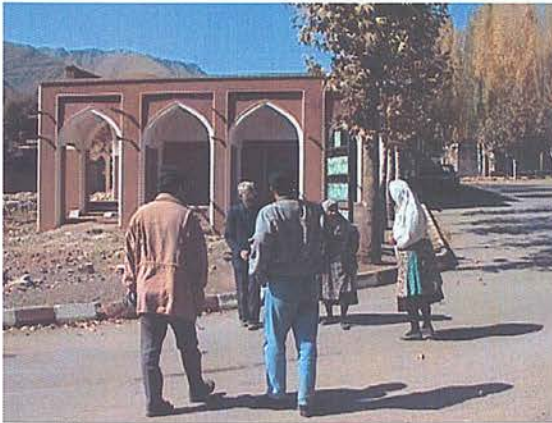
<sup>22</sup> The settlement had its own laws associated with building and its regulations. This was ingrained in the collective mind of the local craftsmen and instigated and agreed to by the settlement’s elected elders.





**Figure 167:** Tagcheh with external and internal recess. Internal niches and sills housed everyday items of living. The more recent paraffin lamp is used for heating and making tea, sometimes for cooking.

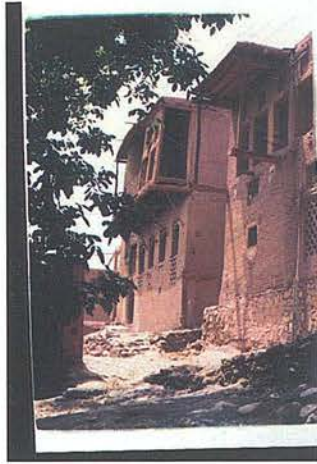
This is a feature very important to the idea of social behaviour and community interaction along their day-to-day working routes and gathering places; a place where ideas would be exchanged and news discussed. In this way the entire settlement was well informed, so much so that, even today, once any visitors walk through the gate, the entire settlement is made aware of their presence until they leave.



**Figure 168:** The awareness of visitors. The start of the road to Kashan at the main gate to Abianeh on the west, at the foreground to the school. Once people enter the main gate or arrive at this point, the settlement is made aware of their presence.

The well-developed dwellings along the “Rashteh” tend to have much thicker walls and contain a higher number of floors while displaying a propriety and status. This

reflects their owners' social status in the settlement and their hierarchy in the village structure, in terms of ownership of land and commercial activity.



**Figure 169**



**Figure 170**



Figure 171

Buildings along Rashteh or Rashteh, the main route through the settlement. Figures 169, 170 and 171 show one of the oldest and, in its heyday, one of the most prominent three storey house types in Abianeh - constructed of mud bricks and hay reinforced clay and timber.

Many of these houses have accommodated elements from different periods, as it was considered fashionable to present an elevation to the settlement reflecting respect while contributing elegance to the main route throughout the settlement. This decorative exercise adding features and character to the buildings was substantially carried out during the Safavid<sup>23</sup> period.

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<sup>23</sup> The Safavid Dynasty witnessed a climax of the arts and crafts movements in the country. Architectural and decorative features to buildings became very fashionable as a sign of culture and status in the community.



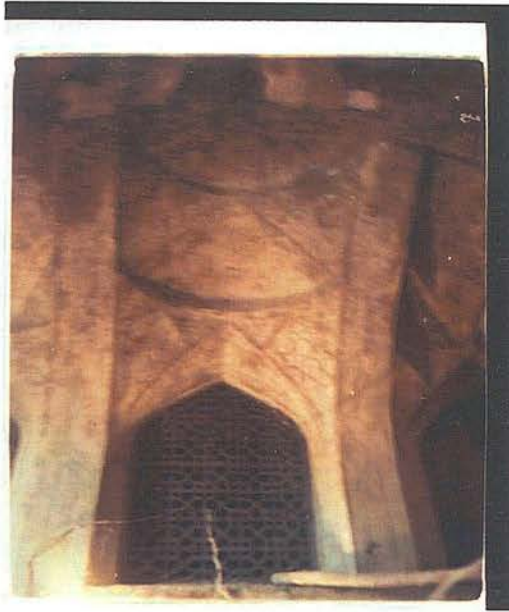


Figure 172

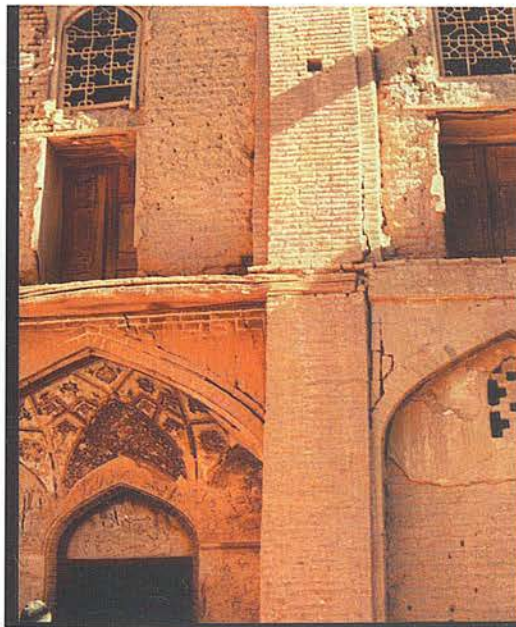


Figure 173

Safavid influences on the facades. Figures 172 and 173 demonstrate more 'Neo-classical' forms achieved from the same constructional methods. Consequently the route through the settlement in later periods, with every twist and turn, revealed a series of external facades whose character added to the richness and complexity of the forms. The maturing of the styles was in keeping with what was then happening in the capital city of Isfahan, by retaining the traditional materials while imitating brick construction, plaster forms and motifs, etc.

The walls are articulated by the entrances, stairs, internal partitioning and openings, all with a fluidity which manoeuvres throughout each building like an inexhaustible veil, thereby lending the buildings a harmonious, homogenous layer of unity. The Palace of Aliqapoo <sup>24</sup> in Isfahan is itself the supreme manifestation of such a primitive structure as those found in Abianeh.



Figure 174: Mrs. Ashrafi working at her knitting on the roof of her house. Sadly her husband who was instrumental to this study died in 2002. Mr. Ashrafi would help the community by bringing oil and goods in his van from Kashan and the adjoining cities.

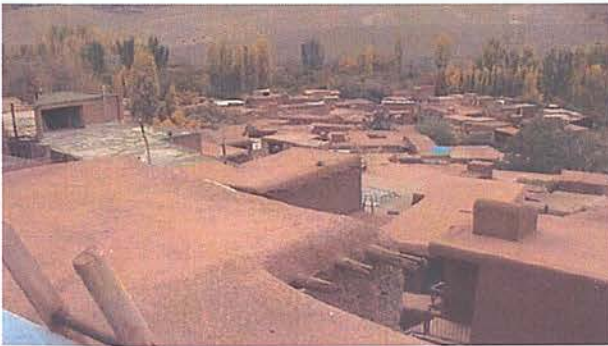


Figure 175: The unity of the buildings. The soft and traditional edges of the indigenous buildings, cascading down the valley in a stepped formation, all in a perfect harmony.

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<sup>24</sup> Aliqapoo is located in the main "Meidan" or square in Isfahan. This is where the king resided and enjoyed his prosperity, while overlooking the King's Mosque to his right, Sheikh Lotfollah Mosque directly across the Meidan, with the Bazar to his left. Before him lay the world's largest civic space where he would watch his visitors and traders enter and even play polo on horseback.



Much less glamorous and decorative than those at the Chehel Sotoun or Aliqapoo palaces in Isfahan, the columns at Abianeh play out their visual role while eclectic in their inspiration. The Abianeh columns are still in essence exhibiting pure form and have an inherent structural reason for their appearance while occasionally echoing their 'cousins' in Isfahan.

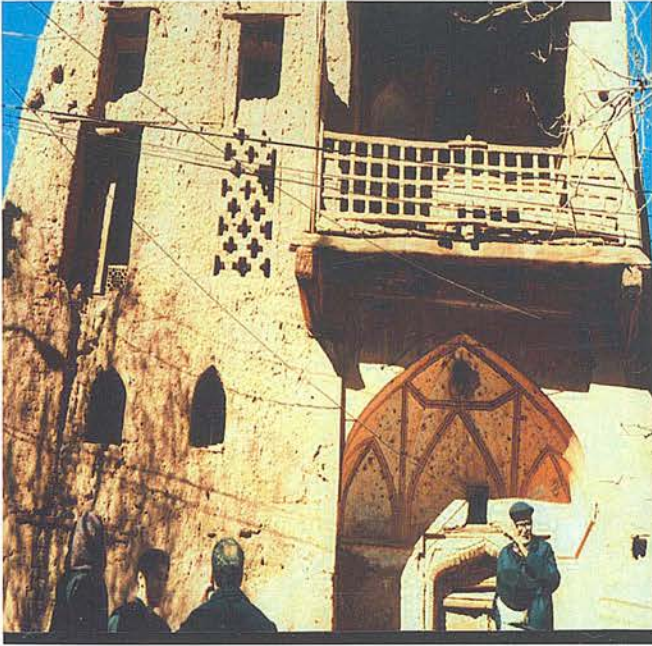


Figure 176: Eclectic architectural iconographic symbolism. The House of Safareh, One of the most attractive and internally complicated houses in the Paendeh or "Herheh", the lower region of the old settlement just behind the Ziaratgah. This house has been redecorated with a heavy Safavid influence, notably the Palace of Aliqapoo in Isfahan.

Silently and elegantly they support the buildings and balconies, the private and public chambers below ground. Hidden from the outside, the columns become structural supports to external walls and partitions as a kind of dry wall system - a tradition in building dating back to antiquity.





**Figure 177: Exposed structural members solidly integrated with the traditional mud and hay reinforced walls. A chemistry which is still a scientific mystery, but has stood the test of time over many centuries.**



**Figure 178: The roof structural elements allowed protruding from the walls for better bearing and for facilitating maintenance and access.**



Figure 179: The use of columns in walls and floors to strengthen the structure and absorb any movement. Contemporary construction with new bricks, but old traditional roofing technique. Located in the Pal region of the settlement

A row of columns boarded together, then rendered with a mud-reinforced hay mixture to form an internal finish, was a technique that was lighter than mud-brick construction, especially on upper floors where, due to its lightness and speed of operation, the 'wet' system was superseded. However not all buildings in Abianeh are constructed in this way; the majority still obey the traditional mud-brick construction method.

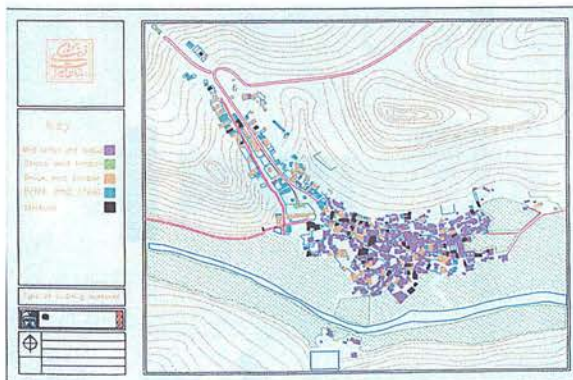


Figure 180: Construction materials used and their locations. Drawing and survey by the researcher; part of the main submission to National Heritage of Iran for the purposes of a revitalisation programme.



The same technique and the same columns are used to form openings to windows, doorways, and to set out the building in its hidden character while holding the 'crumbling flesh' together, acting as an inner skeleton. Every now and then it reveals itself as a canopy or when a cantilever is formed, revealing clues as to the identity and techniques used.



Figure 181: The 'virgin balcony', an early type of balcony demonstrating that this addition to the building type was evolving in Abianeh only and was not imported. The patio door is not yet a door and is not quite a window. The belongings on the balcony demonstrate that a need was developed for storage or drying space first. Later on, it developed as an external integrated space to the first floor.

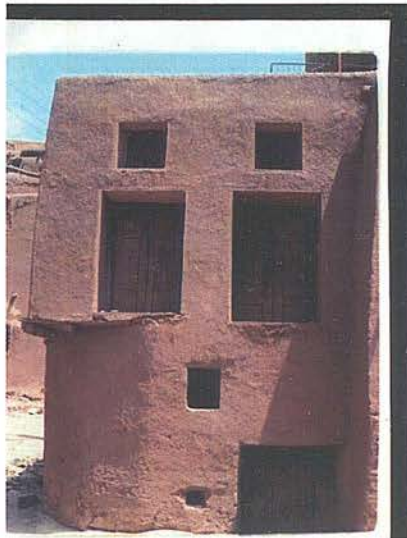


Figure 182: Beams and columns as cantilevers, lintels etc. The negotiation of corners and the first floor construction are so primitive and experimental that it becomes obvious that the "Mimaar", or master builder at the time, was inventing as he was constructing, while taking into account the priority of the route and the requirements of the living spaces above. Thus, an unusual canopy projection over the street was created, thereby demonstrating the raw and fresh inventive nature of the built form with archetypal examples of their details in every corner of the settlement.



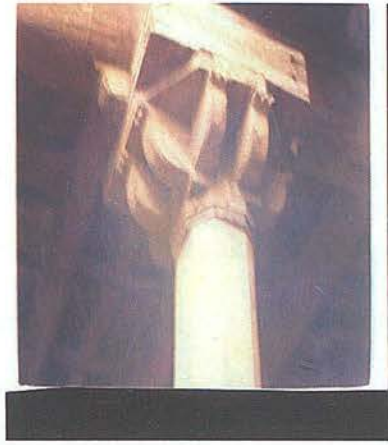


Figure 183: Eclectic architectural detail relating to the classical forms of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> century Safavid architecture. Columns following the orders have a base, shaft and capital. A much more developed iconographic symbolism, while enriching the settlement's more prominent building types, was used as decoration on structural columns. The Jameh Mosque, Abianeh.



Figure 184: Eclectic Architectural detailing on the balconies along the Rashteh, the main route through the settlement. A mixture of Islamic minarets and the ideas of Greek orders were imported during the great influence of Isfahan over the region, illustrating the Safavid delight with the then International styles.

### 5.7 The Phenomena of Orientation and Proportion

The general flow and positioning of party walls between buildings follow the contours of the mountainside and retain a perpendicular consistency. The buildings invariably all face south and back on to the mountain.

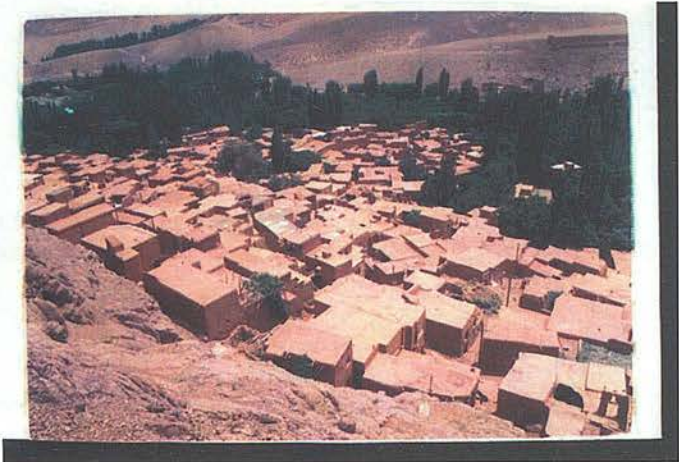


Figure 185

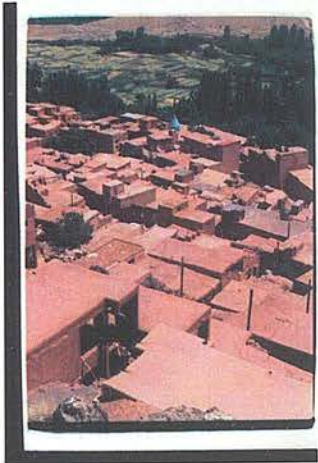
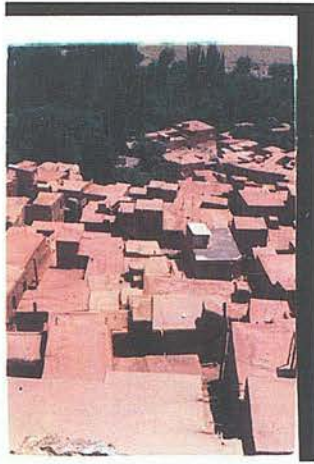


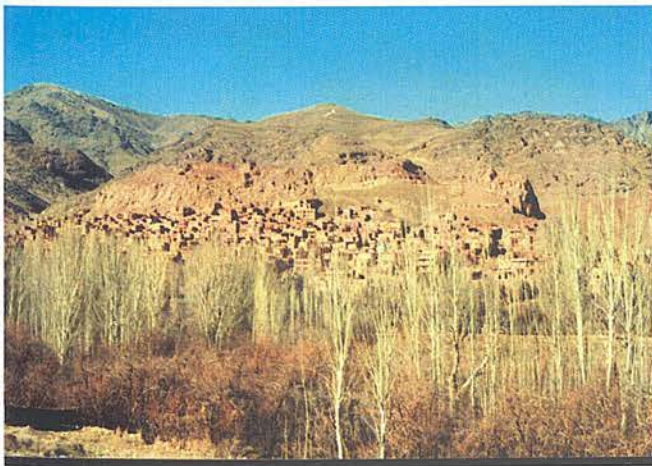
Figure 186



**Figure 187**

View of the houses looking south. Figures 185, 186 and 187 demonstrate the roof forms as an inexhaustible landscape of habitable working and sleeping platforms readily accessible across the settlement.

The high winds are predominantly from east to west and therefore the buildings shield themselves by presenting blank walls to the east and by facing south away from the mountain. The settlement also protects itself from the heavy winter snowfalls and the occasional falling rocks. At the higher elevation, at the rear of most dwellings, there are blank walls of substantial construction and with a clear walkway linking all around the settlement.



**Figure 188: Winter across the valley to the south**



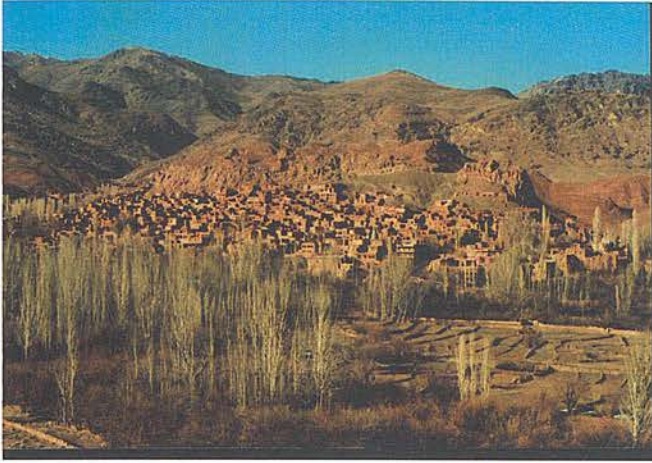


Figure 189: Panoramic view of the settlement across the valley during late autumn.

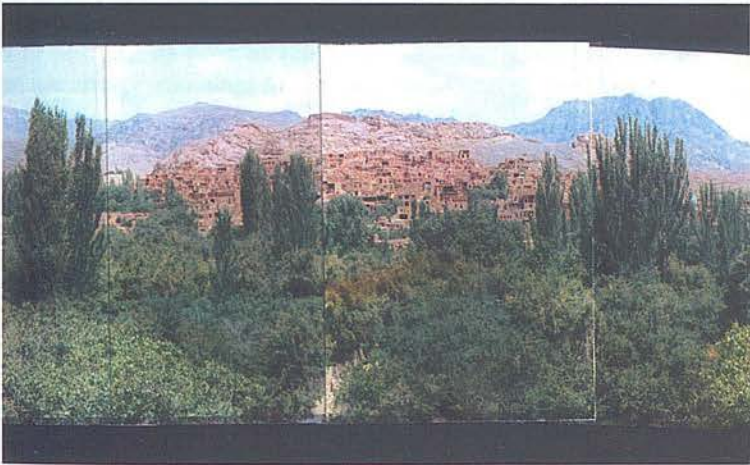


Figure 190: View of the houses against the mountain to the north in the background. Summer across the valley to the south in the foreground.

The shapes of the roofs and their natural contours and falls each help maintain a rhythmic continuity to naturally drain the rain away from the topmost dwelling to the ones at the bottom of the settlement, all within recognizable zones relating to each house and its immediate pathway.

The rainwater is trained and guided onto projecting gutters, originally made of timber and built within the structure of the roof, made as an integrated part of the roof appearance and construction.

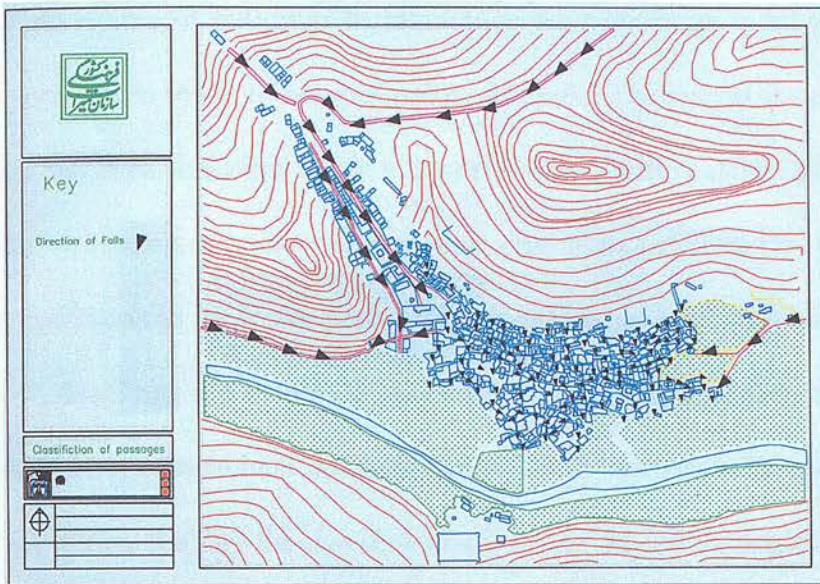


Figure 191: View of the falls as used by each house gutter system on the roof tops. Survey and drawing by the researcher. As part of revitalising and preserving the main natural surface drainage system to be used as part of the local building regulation and for the "Prevention of obstruction to the natural phenomena of the settlement".

The water drains into paths that run at right angles to the contours and the dwellings. Therefore the paths in turn become waterways and part of the drainage route to the lower part of the valley, on to the river beyond. Well proportioned buildings, stretch in parallel along the main route through the settlement, known as the 'Rashteh', which is the most dominant urban feature, while outlining the main contour of the land through the settlement and its relationship with the mountain.



Figure 192: View of the main route and the mountains beyond. Looking south towards the fort of Pal or Palehamaneh.



The total surface area of buildings in relation to their openings is so great and the number of openings is made to be minimal in all cases. The reason for this concerns heat loss and the least intrusion of air into areas where heat requires to be retained. However the buildings are orientated in such a way as to facilitate twenty-four hour continuous ventilation in the lower parts of the dwellings, to allow for storage and the Akhor<sup>25</sup>. The dwellings are in general slow thermal responding buildings, meaning that they take a long time to heat up (hence cool down), but retain heat and release it gradually. So, during the day the dwellings heat up and at night release their energy. This is mainly due to the density of the built fabric and its capacity to act as a long-term insulator, making it a slow response building. Internally at night, the reverse occurs by heating up from within through metabolic heat gain from the occupants and, rapidly, from appliances. In the case of severe cold spells, a traditional internal heating system is used involving the "Corsi" and oil.

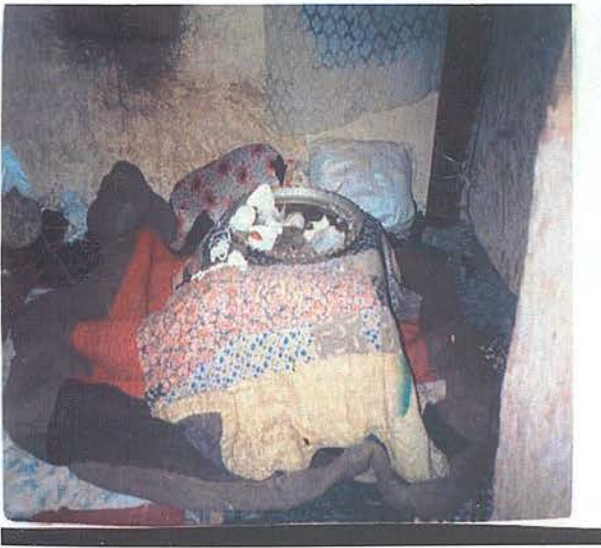


Figure 193: The Corsi, is one of the traditional single heating devices still being used in Iran. A wooden frame is covered in bedding. In the centre, beneath a heating unit of live coal covered with ash, the heat is gently released throughout the cold winter nights. The Corsi provides four sides having a cover capacity of a minimum of four people.

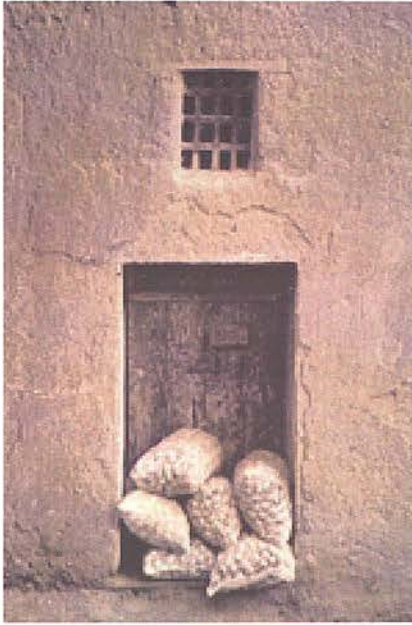
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<sup>25</sup> Akhor: The stables or the place where livestock or their feed is kept within the dwellings.



The orientation and design of windows are such that they also cater for the cold and hot periods. The window types follow, in general, three variations:

The windows are designed to bring in the heat and/or retain it. These are windows, which have Venetian type blinds and have relatively large panes of glass and often in two leaves;



**Figure 194: Large windows at high level. This is a classic entrance to a single cell unit with its window above it, the first characteristic feature of the house in Abianeh, as old as the settlement itself.**

The windows facilitate continuous ventilation, thanks to perforated geometrically patterned frames made of bricks or timber, thereby allowing 50 to 80% ventilation, yet retaining security and privacy;

The windows are designed to give privacy, vision and light. Examples are sash windows and/or a combination of ventilation and fully glazed sections.



Figure 195: Window design and the daylight factor relationship

### 5.8 The Routes through Abianeh and Their Specificity

#### 5.8.1 Main routes and heavy traffic and trade.

There are no dead ends in this town and all routes are connected to the 'Rashteh' throughout the settlement. No effort has been made to uproot rocks, or projecting naturally formed rocks, along the routes. No two routes look the same or are in an exact proportion in terms of their width, levels, deviations or their relationship with the buildings.

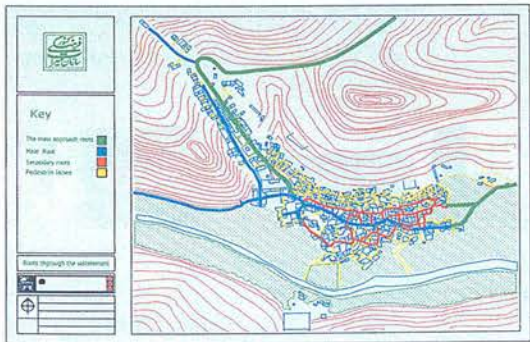


Figure 196: Existing routes throughout the settlement. Part of the main submission for the preservation and revitalisation programme as part of the “natural phenomena of the settlement” by the researcher.

### 5.8.2 Primary Route

The main route, 'Rashteh', served as the main procession and collective activities of the dwellers through the settlement and formed the main trading route from the main gates to the west through to the east of the settlement and out of the area. The main route has in parallel to it the main water open drainage system, which can be observed from time to time as it, passes through under and over land. The 'Rashteh' has two branches coming off it, one at the outset of the settlement to the west, the other by the 'Ziaratgah' to the east. These routes run almost parallel to the 'Rashteh' at times but are undulating and are ultimately main access roads to upper mountain dwellings.

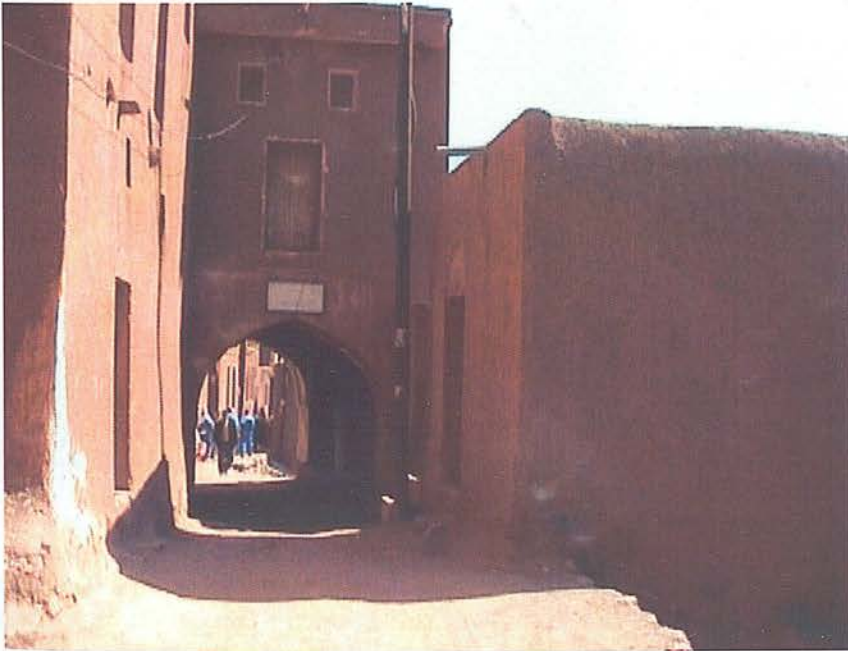


Figure 197: View through the archway or pend by the fire temple and adjoining houses along the Rashteh, the primary route throughout the settlement.



### 5.8.3 Secondary Routes

The secondary routes through the settlement are mostly formed along the north-south direction at right angles to the 'Rashteh'. The routes are then either to the north of the 'Rashteh' or to the south. The northern routes access the upper houses and the southern routes accesses those houses lower down. The southern routes become steeper at the beginning and shallower as they tend toward the edge of the river. The pathways embrace other linear features in the forms of a Joob,<sup>26</sup> a central stream, and walled gardens when passing through the lowest parts of the settlement.

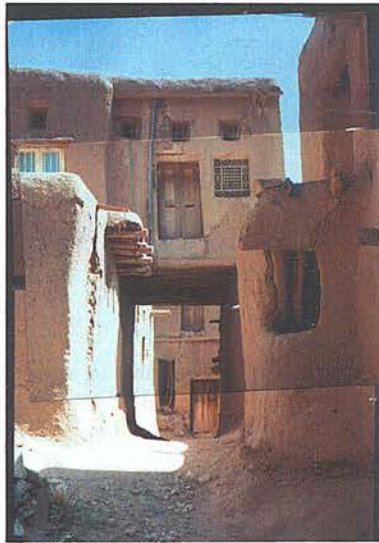


Figure 198: Typical secondary route in the Ballade region of the settlement, showing an underpass to the settlement. A complexity of form and intricacy of design: "The intertwining and utilisation of space with in a settlement" a true evolution in urban synergy. This gives the settlement an understanding and identity well above the average settlements in the region. A vertical distribution from rustic floor at the base up to the "Piano Nobile" containing the first floor living rooms to the special "Piano Attica" with the attic rooms at the top echoing the basements below reveal an, ordering sensibility well understood in the modern world. This is a complexity worthy of any sophisticated cities of our time.

<sup>26</sup> Open gully in the middle of the paths.

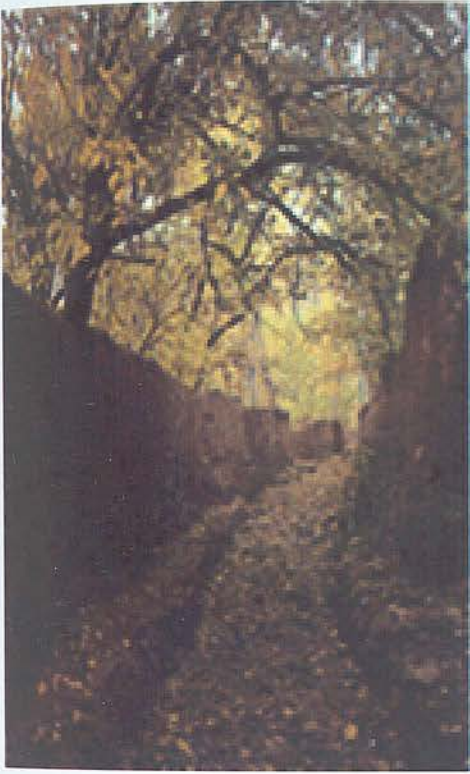


Figure 199

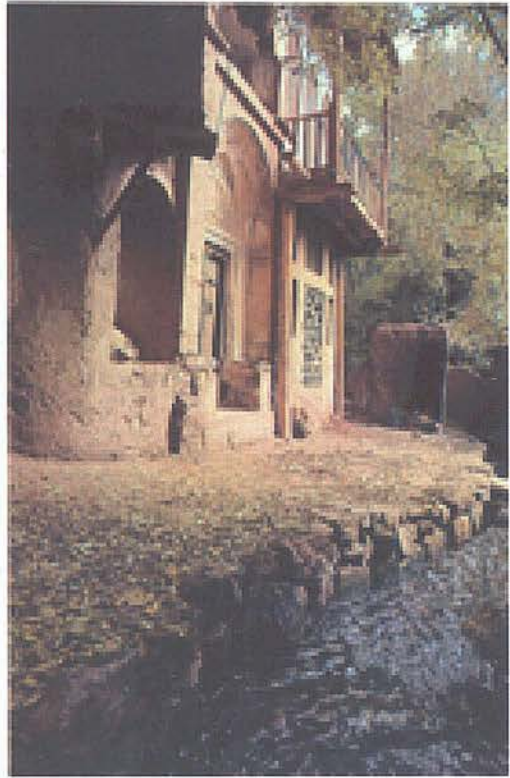


Figure 200

**Figures 199 & 200: Relationship of the "Joob" surface drainage, to walled gardens and houses. Location to the south of the settlement leading to the river beyond, with channels lined up in the middle to naturally drain the water to the river beyond.**

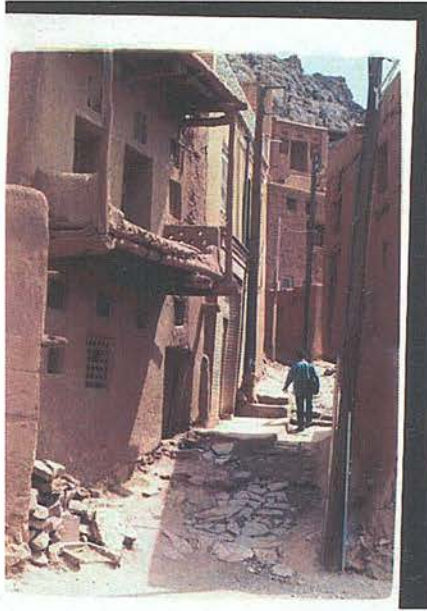
The secondary routes were as important to the settlement as the main routes because they connected the internal activities of the dwellers and their relationships with each other, along with the places of work beyond in the orchards and the gardens. Tertiary routes are evident all around the settlement from the north, a mountain lane, from the south, lower garden paths, from the east, open routes, from the west the main gate<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> The main gate to Abianeh was a ceremonial entrance and not a permanent doorway, although a gate is said to have existed at one time. The key supporting stones are still visible at the Rashteh entrance.



and its connection to the mill and fields beyond. These outer routes were all also connected at various points to the settlement and gave reasonable efficient access to the dwellings. This emphasises further the fluidity and transparency of movement through the settlement.

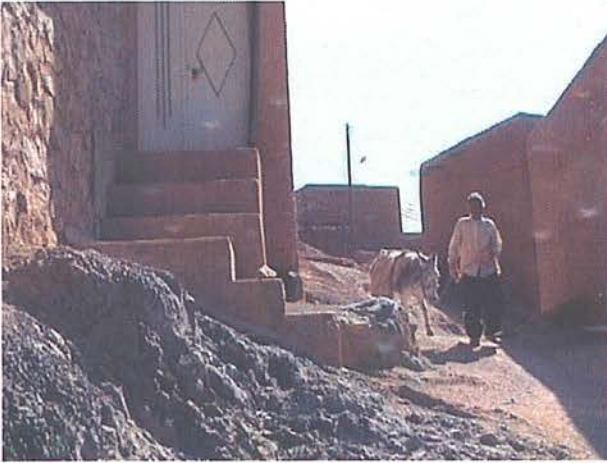


**Figure 201:** The formation of the buildings and their Neighboring dwellings, Party walls and roofs reflect a very unique social code of conduct and understanding in Abianeh. Area between Paendeh region and Pakhoongah forming a tertiary type of route through the settlement.

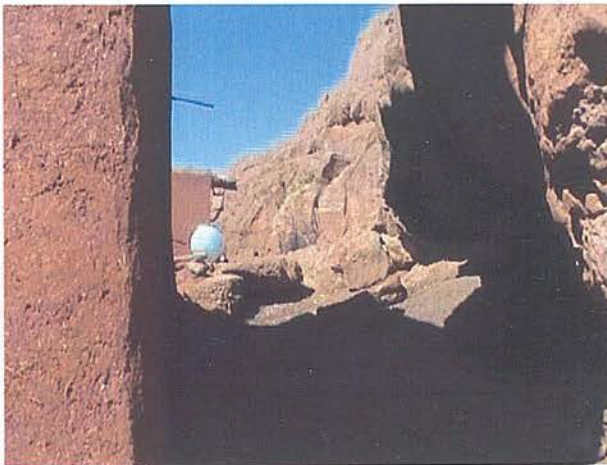
These were the routes connecting additional areas around the settlement, both locally and nationally. Many of these were mainly located along the riverside and over the hills to Hinza Temple and to other fields and lands beyond. Mostly used for bringing in the harvest and taking equipment to maintain the fields and for trade with other areas along the main route to Kashan and Natanz. In later years the main route from the east of the settlement was mostly used for local matters, while the main asphalt



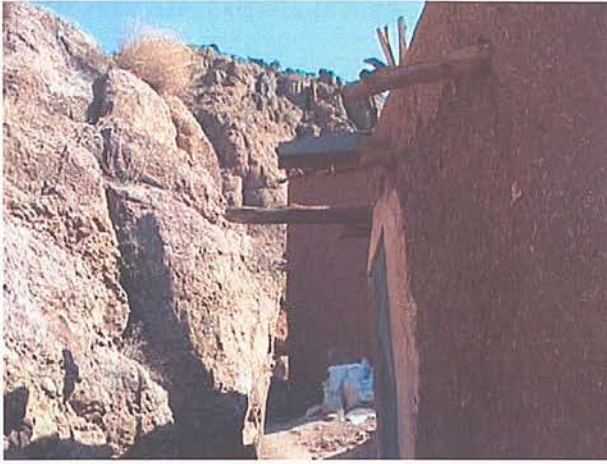
road approaching the settlement from the west was for regional and national access.



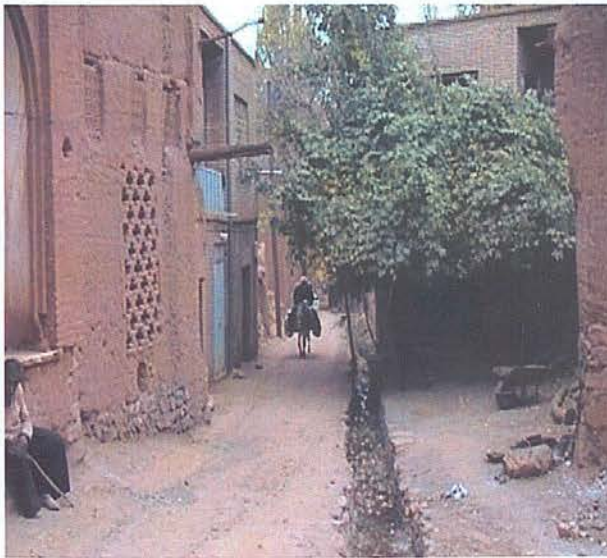
**Figure 202: Fourth category of routes. Paths to mountain houses, harmoniously designed to negotiate every corner and natural flow of the contours of the hillside.**



**Figure 203: Fourth category of routes. Mountain route cont. showing the integrity of the mountain and buildings retained, in most cases. Abianeh has no dead ends and all routes join the Rashteh, the main route through the settlement.**



**Figure 204: Fourth category of routes. All around the settlement there are paths and every path is allowed to maintain the integrity of its neighbouring walls, mountains, gardens etc.**



**Figure 205: Fourth category of routes. Route through Paecndeh to the orchards and valleys beyond, central gully used for surface drainage, following the natural fall of the mountain to the river beyond.**



## 5.9 Specific Architectural Rules

The architectural form of the entire settlement is essentially heterotypic in nature and is one which has developed and been created through time and historic events. This has gradually influenced the people's way of life throughout the settlement.

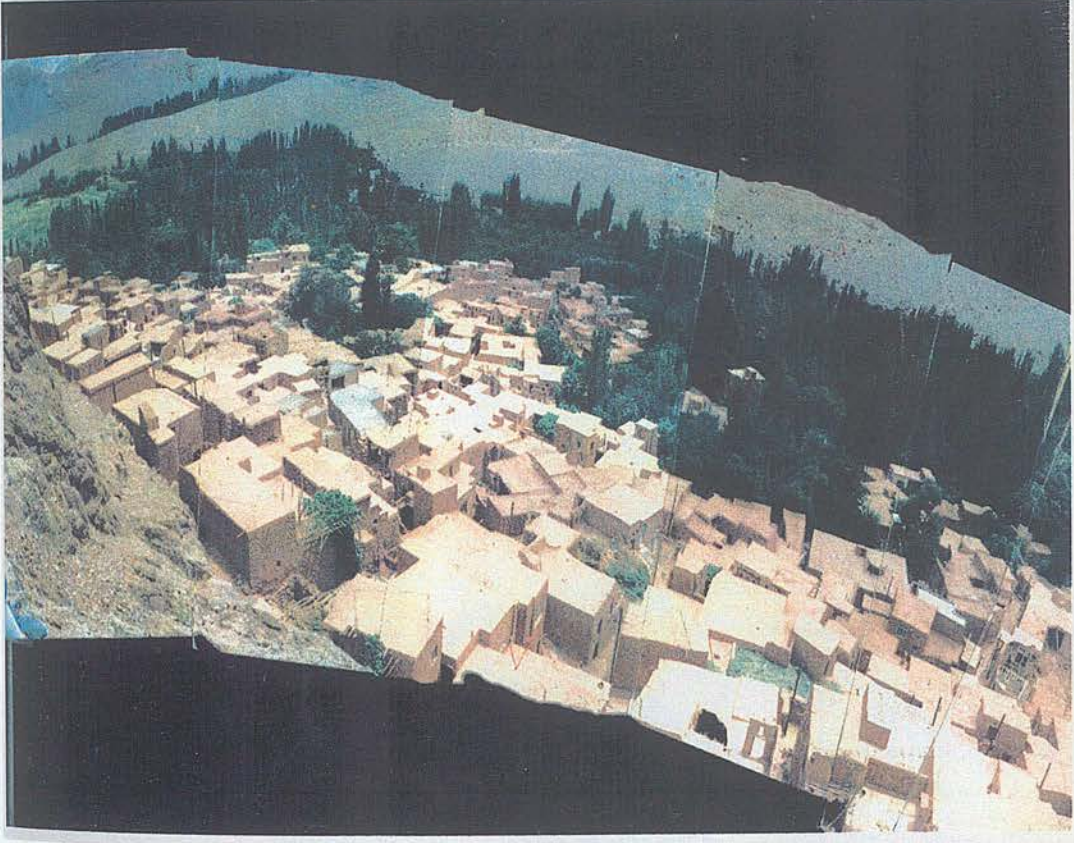
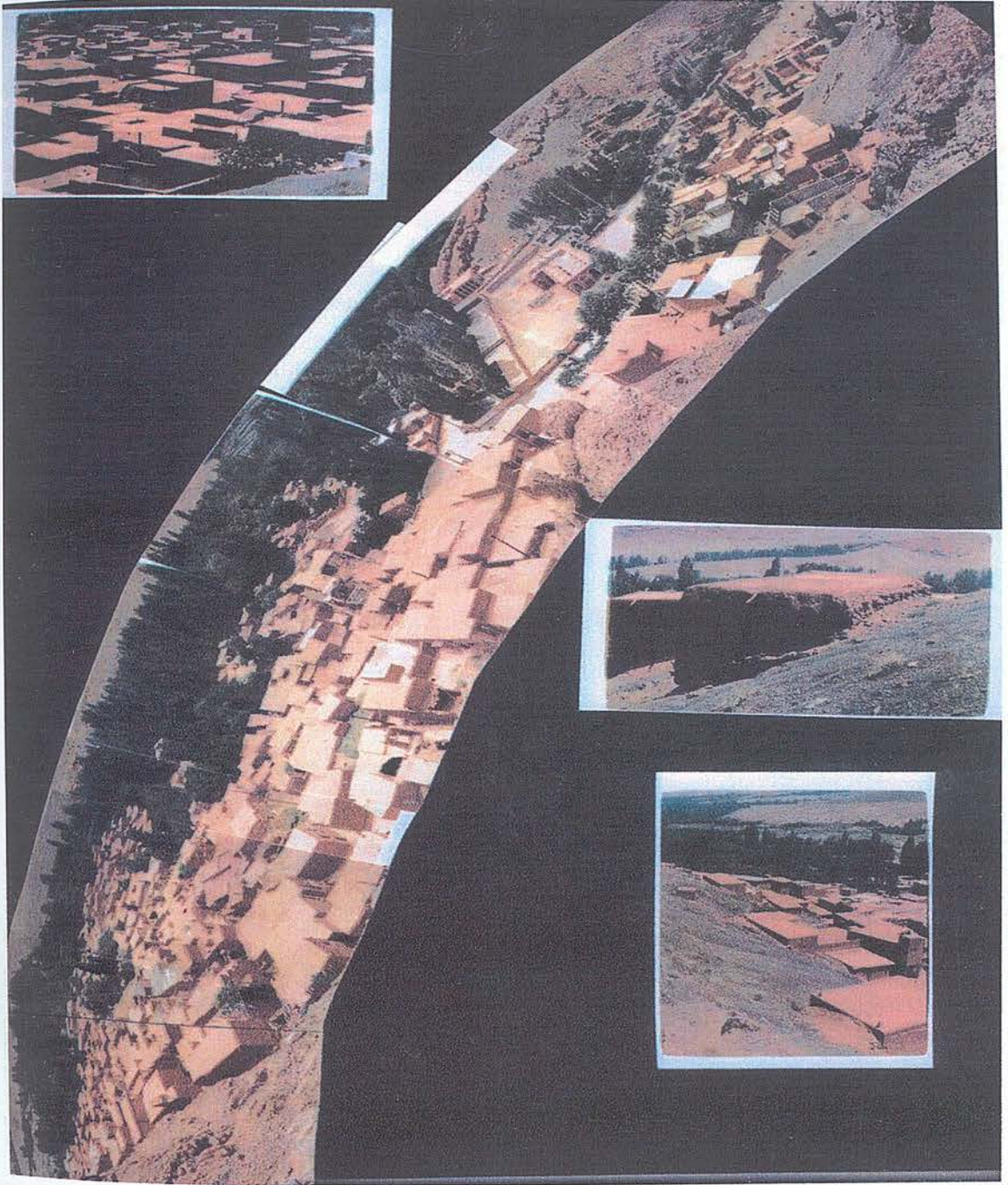


Figure 206: Ordering sense of Heterotopia: Organic, crystal-like, rectilinear, and randomly uniform





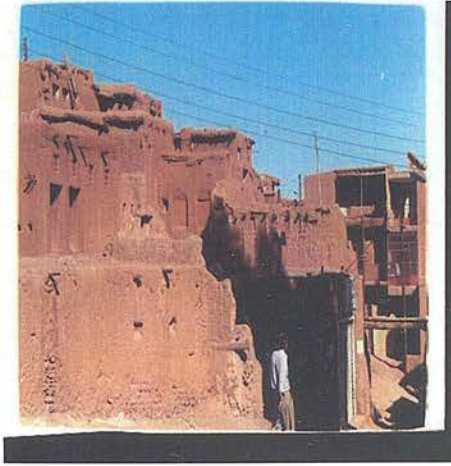
**Figure 207: Demonstration of heterotypic and irregular urban form typologically developed from a single cell to a complex organisation and grouping of dwellings harmonised in one spirit. A natural development of the hillside and the rocks that form it. Photographs by the researcher. Facing south, panoramic view of the settlement.**

Long before Christianity or Islam ever started, life in this little settlement was in motion and its evolution was forming while the settlement was developing.

The strategic location, the safety factors, and being sheltered between the mountains, must each have played a key role in its location as a potential site, as did the existence of water and the delightful seasonal changes of climate, allied with abundantly available supplies of building materials.

Techniques of building and the topography of the land helped determine its realisation and form.

The settlement has developed on the mountain almost by resembling the very rocks it sits upon.



**Figure 208:** View of the main gate to the right and houses immediately to the north. A series of well preserved houses sits firmly on the mountainside, blending in with the terrain and still inhabited. Yosman area of the settlement.



The social development and unity of the inhabitants and self reliance on their own skills and needs have evolved into a typology unique in Iran known as "Biroongara"<sup>2</sup> meaning externally orientated, as opposed to houses which are inward looking, typically with a courtyard, which are very common in Iran. This also means that such houses have been designed with no gardens or open private spaces to the interior.

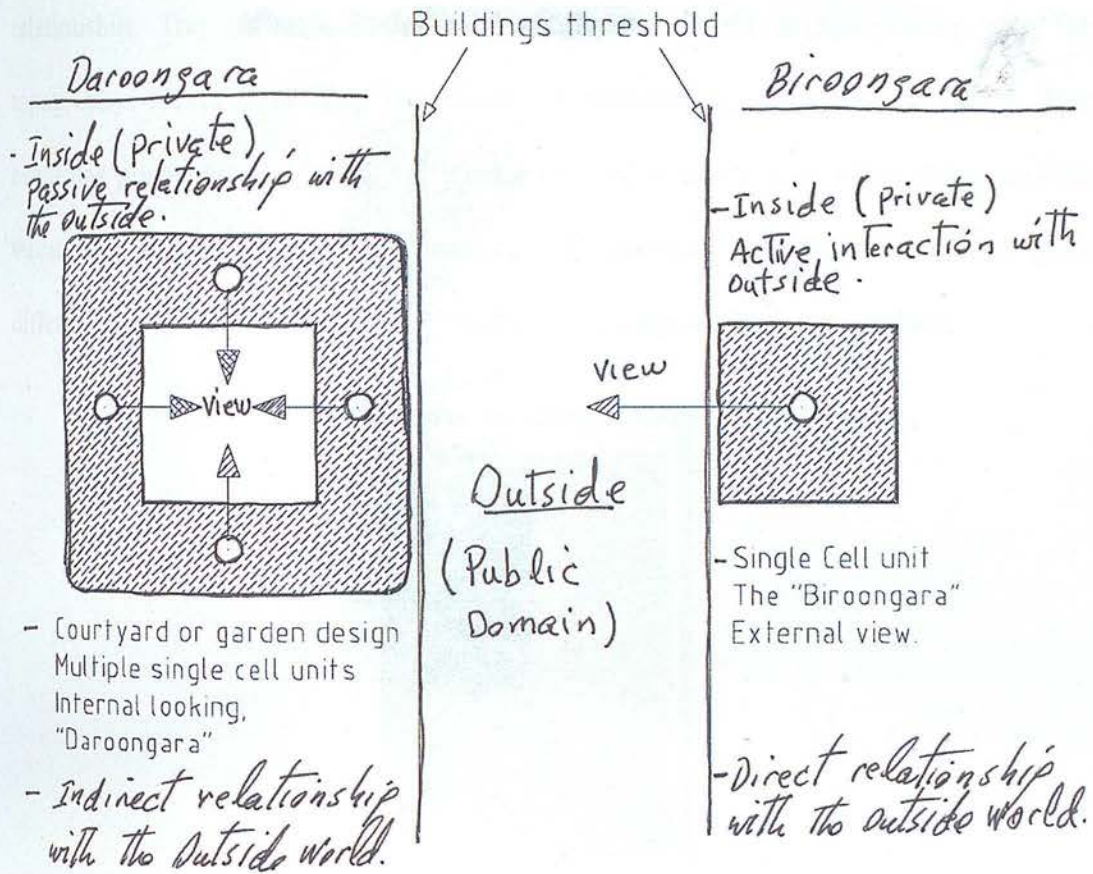


Figure 209: Concept of the Biroongara House as appose to Daroongara

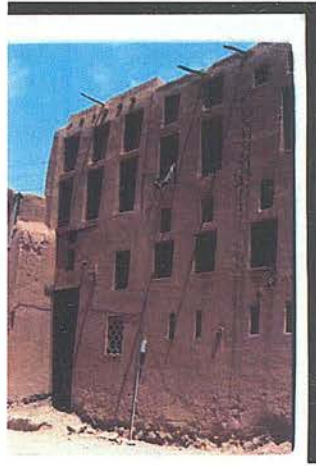
Consequently all external elements such as spaces, doorways, windows, balconies, and stores open directly to the outside spaces, with no gardens or the apparent need

<sup>2</sup> Biroongara means externally looking. That is a house type without outer courtyard or walled gardens, opening and reacting immediately to their external spaces.



for privacy or an inner sanctum of the dwelling. The use of special meeting spaces and essential elements such as windows and balconies to outside sitting areas, both at private and public level, all demonstrate a relationship to the ideologies inherent to this settlement while being of a highly civilised nature.

The built fabric is made to relate actively with its surroundings and has a direct relationship. The entrance is located at different levels in accordance with the topography. Never have they overcome the surroundings to create a habitat. This event has given the settlement a rhythmic balance at street level while quite uniform throughout. However, at every entrance the character and the features are quite different and in each case a unique solution to its purpose has been realised.



**Figure 210:** The house of "Cheetsaz" at the main gate. Famous for the family business of dyeing cloth.

The organic growth of the settlement has resulted in a very tight and closely knitted environment. Buildings at some point are fused together on all three sides. In some cases access to a property can be obtained only through another building. The ground, first and the second floors may have their own entrances.

**5.10. Investigation into unwarranted buildings imposed on the existing forms.**



**Figure 211: The intrusion of cars in to the prohibited inner zone and the use of conflicting building materials on existing buildings. Most of the dwellings in this neighbourhood belong to people otherwise living in Tehran**

There are a number of buildings, which have been erected on the outskirts and to the east of the settlement on the approach to the village. These do not follow the historical norm and yet they are accepted by the inhabitants, as the architecture of “Daroongara”<sup>3</sup>. A few of these dwellings border the orchards and the lower part of Abianeh where the walls of the gardens and the buildings merged.

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<sup>3</sup> Daroongara is a style of architecture with internal courtyard and or gardens. It is designed to have total privacy from the outside world and shielded by high walls. Its functions are central to the dwelling.



## Chapter Five

Others are located along the approach road to the settlement, just outside the main gate. They are totally modern and dismissive of all the indigenous rules, obeying a more 'international' style, thereby emulating many of Iran's city housing of today.

It should be noted that, ironically, the one type of building, which is unique in its type, to Abianeh the "Chahar-Sofeh"<sup>4</sup> is both Biroongara and Daroongara, a true chameleon with a double life. Although it exists in other regions of Iran, it has perfected itself in Abianeh. It is Biroongara because of its first floor relationship with the outside spaces and main entrances and fenestration, and Daroongara because it has an inner courtyard or "Atrium" and a central light well.

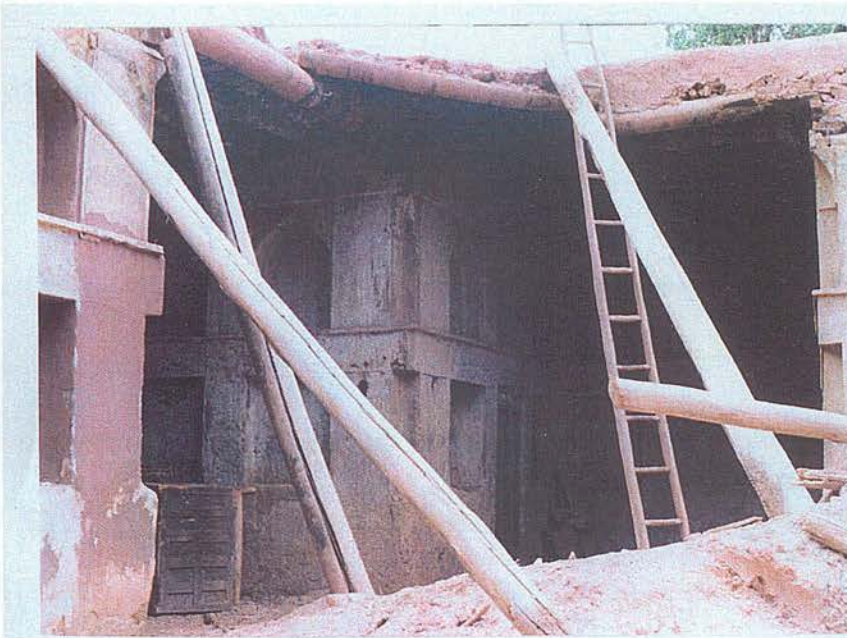


Figure 212

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<sup>4</sup> The Chaharsoffeh dwelling is one of the most developed house types, well adapted in Abianeh and forming a unique typological development of an original statement into a new type of dwelling.





Figure 213: Study of the Chahar-Sofeh house - Unique photograph<sup>5</sup>

### 5.11. Special Aspects of the Residential Dwelling

The residential dwellings of the settlement are built to fulfil all the needs of their inhabitants in all seasons for all aspects of their day to day lives. The house is seen not as a place to live in but as an extension of their lives and inherent functions. So the house contains the granary or silo, fruit storage, storage for their field equipment, public and private cooking facilities, winter and summer materials, storage of fuel and other seasonal goods required to function and sustain them.

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<sup>5</sup> The Chaharsoffeh" dwelling, a unique type of building in Abianeh with a central light well. Since this photograph was taken in 1988, the building has been severely damaged beyond repair. "An all in one house", it was a perfect solution to an integrated life-style of living within the settlement and yet catering for all their needs and livestock. See The Archetypal form of the Chaharsoffeh Dwelling and the Atrium design. (Picture by: Kamran Jebraili 1988 Axxpress, Tehran- Iran).

A house could have a silo, which was filled from the top, on the first or the second floor, and extracted through a hatch at the bottom of the silo on the ground floor. Here nature and gravity work for them. Yet in the same dwelling one could find the most exquisite decorations and sensitivity towards cleanliness, utility and habitation.

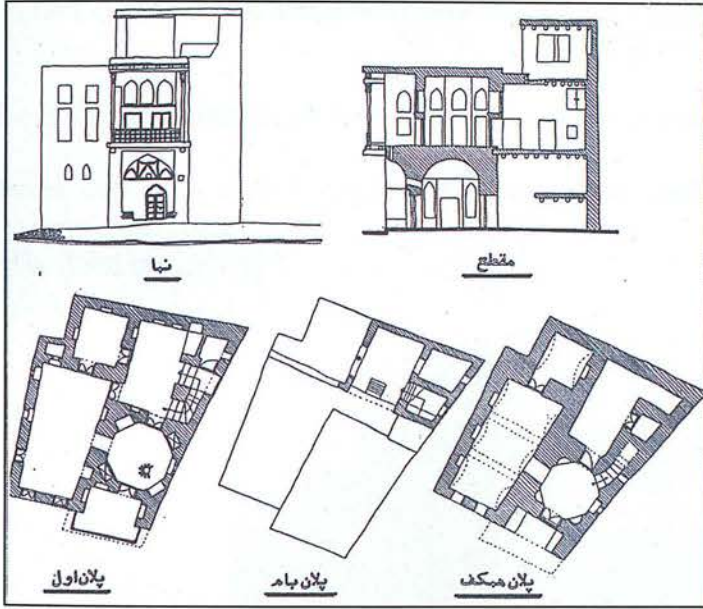


Figure 214: Insert the house of Zahiri, drawing by the researcher.

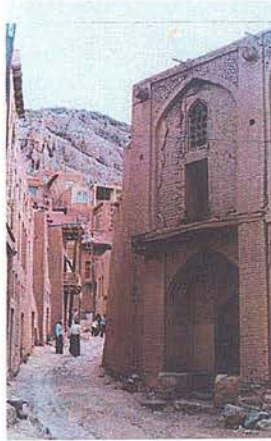
The residential dwelling was built as 'a machine for living in'. Every corner or external space, such as the roof, was used for a specific purpose, with a small associated circulation area. Consequently the majority of the floor area would be used as living space or as functional zoning. This indicates that it may be the need of the inhabitants to identify their structural zoning as an important factor in their design parameters evolved out of Function architecture.

Some houses also catered for their inhabitant's trade such as dyeing clothing, making handicrafts, weaving carpets or shoe making.

## Chapter Five

In most houses of the earlier period a cell or a room, attached to the building, operated externally and internally and was housed in the lowest area of the house, usually with a direct route to the outside and invariably from a different angle to that of the main entrance of the house. Mostly its use was dedicated to dairy produce, and housed cows or goats, sometimes sheep. Also accommodated might be load-bearing animals such as mules, horses and donkeys, along with their feed.

Houses were also built with a particular hierarchy and ownership status. A landlord or tenant had different orders to their lifestyles and their houses reflected this status, reflecting a deep understanding and balance.



**Figure 215: Pakhoongah houses uses by the Sufis**

The houses of the settlement were designed as integrated parts of the whole and, in their planning, helped promote good relations with their neighbours, in the form of outside seating and balconies, alternately promoting conversation and visual reassurance as they passed by or worked alongside each other.



5.12 Sabat

Sabat<sup>6</sup> was the name given to the part of a dwelling which formed the underpasses along the routes and main paths through the settlement, while supporting the portion of the houses projecting over them. These underpasses provide one of the most unique features of the settlement, while demonstrating the complexity of construction and the ingenuity of the master-builders of the day in inventing such structures within the settlement.

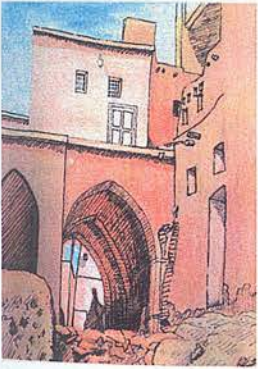


Figure 216



Figure 217

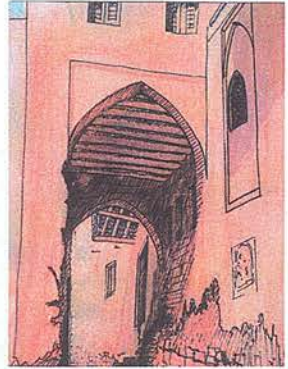


Figure 218

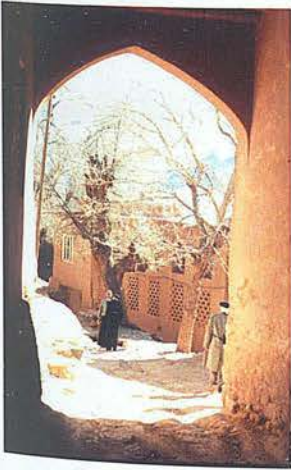


Figure 219

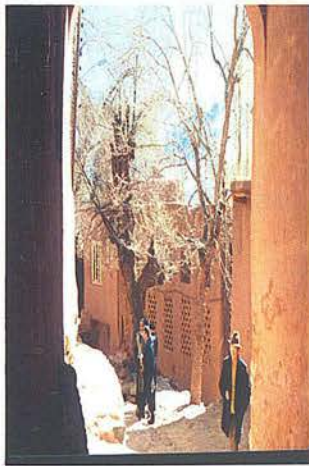


Figure 220



Figure 221

<sup>6</sup> Sabat: Mohammed Karim Pirnia *Understanding Islamic Architecture of Iran*. As edited by Golam Hossein Memarian. The University of Elm & Sanat-Tehran 1371. p. 232.



Figure 222

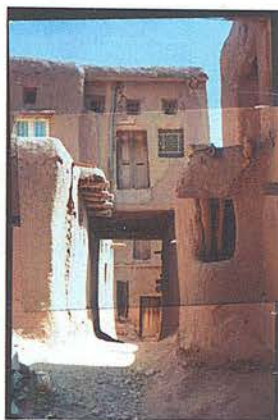


Figure 223

Covered walkway. Figures 216-223 demonstrate some of the designs for underpasses to the settlement. Complexity and intricacy of design at many levels is an essential characteristic. This in turn lends the settlement an understanding and identity well above the average settlements in the region. The vertical distribution of floors from the basement to the ground level rustic, on to the piano nobile and the special attic rooms at the roof all indicate a complexity of design thinking worthy of any sophisticated cities of the same age. The building section reveals a pioneering approach to Iranian building design with its link to a typological origin. This imposes a pattern of development and introduces an archetype in its own right.

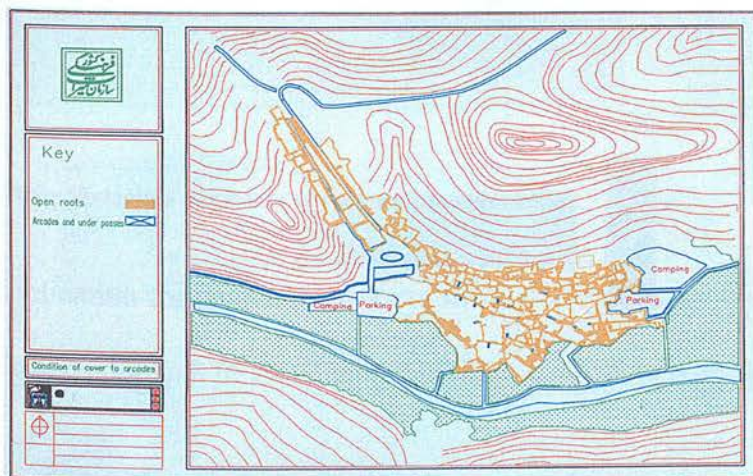


Figure 224: A full survey of the underpasses and walkways, by the researcher



### 5.13 The Use of Building Materials

The tools and techniques of using building materials date back to the beginnings of the human race. The tools themselves can be traced to different periods involving different cultures from as far back as ancient Egypt and China to the present time in Iran.

However in Abianeh the red soil or clay, the natural stone, and straw and hay, were used extensively. The use of timber, procured from trees fringing the adjoining fields and gardens, was directed at strengthening the masonry body and roofs of the various building types. Refinements and special decorative effects in the techniques of carpentry complemented the assured structural handling of this material.

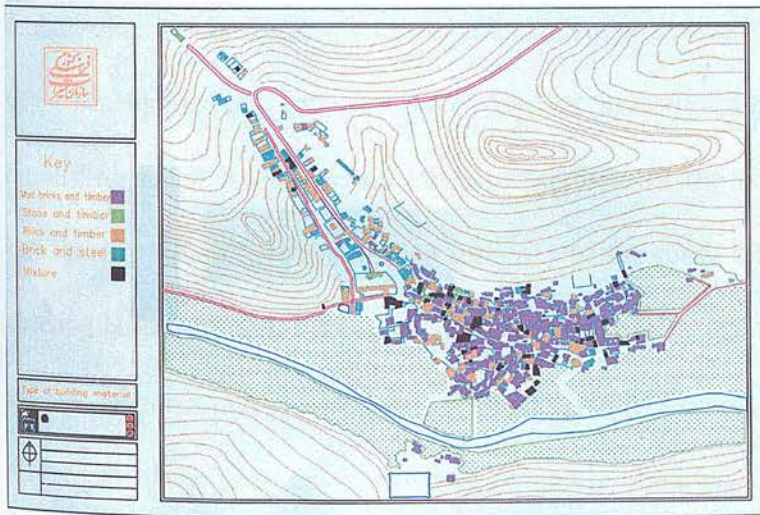


Figure 225: Building Materials complete survey by the researcher

It is a natural inclination for people to seek out the materials that are readily available when developing an approach to sustainable building, in keeping with the surrounding



environment whether the natural physical elements themselves or the urban setting, the latter which may be understood in terms of continuity and harmony<sup>7</sup>.

### 5.14 Traditional construction techniques of existing buildings in the settlement.

These can be understood under the following:

- a. The footings and foundations are made up of dry jointed stone. This is pointed and filled with hay reinforced mud in several layers.
- b. “Khesht Gell” or sun dried clay bricks were extensively adopted. The material was obtained from the soil to the north and north-west of the settlement. The essential earth or clay has intrinsic qualities which make it strong in tension and resistant to rain when applied as cement. Following an investigative survey in 1999 it was established that it is due to the inherent qualities of the soil that the roof retains a homogeneity which helps retain the integrity of the roof construction. In this way the covering layers, in spite of heavy snow and rain fall, resist the pervasive dampness and that, in fact, when wet impervious outer layer is formed. Also used occasionally is yellow clay of the same quality, which is mostly obtained, from the hills to the south of the settlement.

The top covering to the roof is of clay reinforced with hay, laid in several layers on a base layer of clear clay, itself laid on “Chezeh” or flattened wild bushes obtained from the nearby fields. A sheet of woven string or bark of a tree called “Vey” forms an

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<sup>7</sup> Mr. Mehrdad Malazizi, Saving the indigenous dwelling with the aid of Natural Architecture Civil Engineering Designs No.24 , 1372. pp. 26-27.

## Chapter Five

intermediate, impervious layer stopping the clay from falling through any gaps. This 'sandwich' is supported by thin beams known as "Raseb". These in turn are supported by timber columns or solid walls or a combination of both. When much larger supporting elements are spaced apart, substantial load-bearing beams may be deployed to support the Raseb beams noted above.

Internally the use of finer more refined clay is used. This known as "Kahgell" and has to be a well consolidated and worked material before the best mix is ready for application. Its main internal application is as plastering to inner surfaces. More prestigious houses have a layer of plaster applied in two coats, allowing a more refined finish. In the Safavid period, plastering was applied as plaster stops on the corners and edges to give a clean effect and, by rubbing it back to the plaster, a clean edge was achieved which could also incorporate patterns such as "Yazdi Kari" <sup>8</sup>. It also became fashionable to use plaster as the edge detail or bead stop to clay. This was done to stop deterioration of the finishes. It is interesting to note that in the twentieth century we use the same technique of stopping plaster in modern houses with a plaster beading in Stainless steel or galvanised steel. This approach can be very attractive when used in conjunction with a hay reinforced mud finish. The best examples can be observed at the entrances to houses and at the ceiling vaulting of the fire temple - a technique imported to the settlement from Kashan and Isfahan provinces.

In one house just to the east of Ziaratgah the interiors are of exceptional beauty. Interiors feature decorative mirrored glass and hand crafted plaster moulding. It has a front door which is entirely unique in the settlement, being made of many small pieces

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<sup>8</sup> Yazdi kari: A technique of construction and finishes developed in the Safavid period for vaulting and projected edges of vaulting and related patterns in plaster work, framing walls and ceilings.



## Chapter Five

of timber intertwined and dry jointed to form a formidable strong door with an exceptional geometry of grace and beauty.

One reason why Abianeh houses last long concerns the correct use of timber obtained from the surrounding land. There are two reasons for this. One is the quality of timber locally available; the second is the absence of any termites and other pests within the living quarters. Hundreds of different windows are to be seen in Abianeh expressing all kind of needs. These are made with precision and style in a mesh and grids of highly geometrical components, put together as timber to last a life time. Timber was treated in all these cases by locally produced oil, which helped preserve the timber over the years. The formula or composition has been lost to the present generations.



Figure 226: Absence of timber infestation in the settlement.

It is however the wooden doors which add exceptional value to this heritage. It seems that the entrance doors were designed and constructed to last indefinitely, so much so that the owners used it them as a form personal passport by announcing or conveying a message to the street.





Figure 227

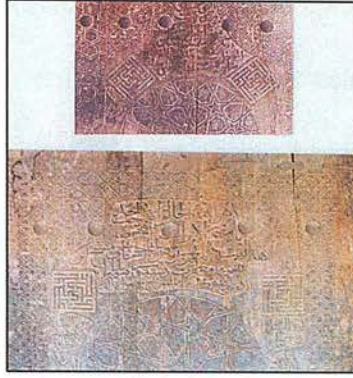


Figure 228

**Figures 227-228: Entrance doors in full. The main door to the Jameh mosque in the heart of the settlement, a typical inscribed entrance door with "Ya Ali", and others left 'plain'.**

Through inscriptions and decoration with the most exquisite patterns and carvings, different periods and occasional inscribed dates helped determine the likely periods of installation. Inscriptions of poetry and Koranic passages, the Hadiths, and so on provided the researcher with additional information pointing to the likely period of completion: some in the period of "Tashayod" (Schism) and some in the period of "Tassano"(Sunnism) referring to the holy Imam Ali the first holy imam of Shia Islam. These doors also received the aforementioned preservative and have stood the test of many centuries.

The doors are of single and double leafs. In Hajatgah there is one dated 953 H.G.(1574 AD) in the Zand dynasty, in the same era of the king Tahmaseb I, which has also an extant inscription in Arabic quoting verses from the holy Koran. The door to the west of Porzaleh mosque is dated 1058(1679) in the time of King Abbas II of the Safavid Dynasty. The doors incorporate dates from the Saljuk period, Ilkhanate period, and the Teymourid period, specifically dated 895H.G. (1516AD). Others dated 1044 (1665), 1038 (1659), 1036 (1657) are distributed around the settlement.

The question, which doors belong to the Safavid period or were repaired during that period, can be answered through knowledge and observation. It is usually found that the doors from the Safavid period have inscribed on them the following word "Yamofataholahrab" or inscriptions by their owners using poetry which indicated that there is mercy, forgiving and kindness from God and worthy of Man:

**"God you open on to me a door, So that I do not need any other",**

or

**"May this door be always open unto thee".**

An almost philosophic, spiritual way of treating a doorway is an extension of a people's wellbeing, with respect and ceremonial courtesy a phenomenon perhaps more popular in the far eastern cultures of ancient days. The door is regarded as a symbol of life, linking two worlds and conveying messages from one life into another. This demonstrated the special nature of these people and how they stand out in their understanding of life and that it is a transient phenomenon.

Showing kindness and being loving towards each other and their neighbours is no better illustrated than their doorways as the fundamental greeting sign.

Throughout the region associated with Abianeh, the inhabitants of each settlement have used building materials in a particular way to suit their special needs, thereby facilitating construction, suitability of context, commodity, and durability often endorsed with their own signatures and decorative forms of personalisation, to stand the tests of time and the elements.



In Abianeh however, they have taken this further on and created a style which has contributed to a unique environment, to be enjoyed by all - residents and visitors. Two or three basic types of material have characterised the region, the prime building materials being stone or stone based aggregate, clay, and the other was the timber readily available from the local trees: Kabood, Tabrizi, Chenar, Sanabar, and "Shakh va bargeh Beed". In addition, shoots and leaves of the willow tree, together with cane, were locally available and used to a great extent.

### 5.15 Traditional Restoration Methods

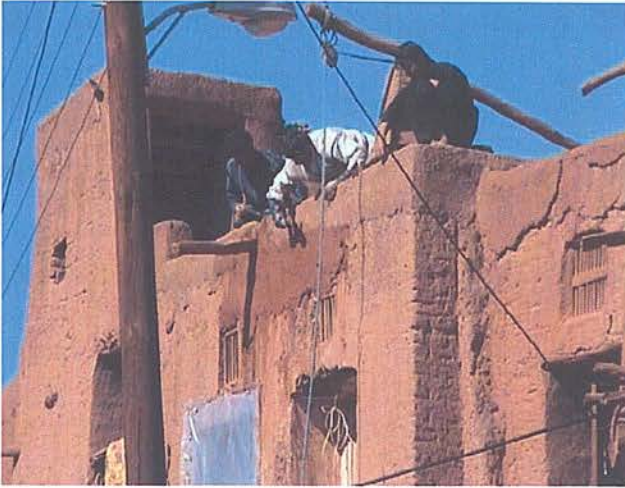
Abianeh as a settlement can be considered a three-dimensional 'blanket' of historical remains while its archetypal essence is unique and has a character unmatched in the region as a whole. The standing forms of reasonable life expectancy and of value have to a great extent been influenced mostly by the Sassanid period to the end of the Qajar era. The result is about 700 dwellings mostly of historical value, in many cases unique, and unrepeated in their homogeneous entirety. Several houses, such as the Chahar-Sofeh, stand out from the rest due to its unique typological form and perfection.

An element added during the Safavid period to these houses is located at their entrances where a hallway is provided and is usually void of any daylight. Known as "Hashti", it also housed the staircase to the first floor.

It is relevant to mention that in the year 1192 (1813) and in the reign of Karim Khan Zand, together with other villages around Kashan such as Natanz, Abianeh was subjected to severe natural disasters such as earthquakes and floods. However the



inhabitants took pride in their built environment and, due to an abundance of local skills, managed to restore their natural and man-made habitats, with as little changes as possible, a true restoration approach and not merely by replacement or renovation.



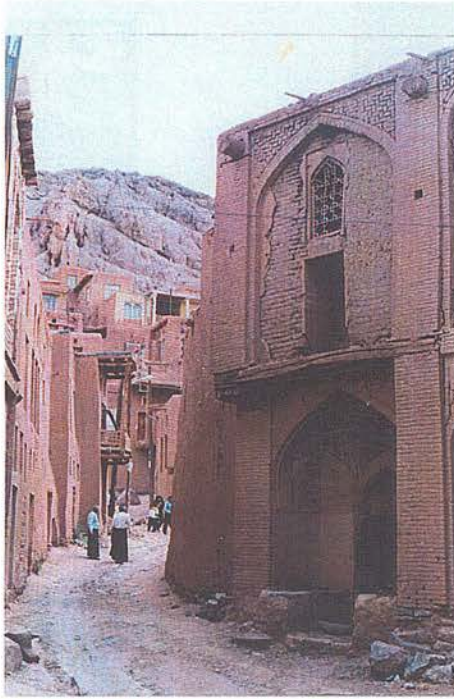
**Figure 229: Traditional restoration**



**Figure 230: Replacement building in the Yosman area of the settlement - new bricks and interiors, traditional finishes being applied to the external elevation as rendering. Supervision by the National Heritage agency. An acceptable variation in the reconstruction and revitalisation of the settlement.**

While this demonstrated the pride they took in their source of identity, it is also important to note that at no time was the entire settlement ever influenced by any one culture. The residents only admitted elements into their lives which they considered important and relevant. They did the same with Islam, embracing it, yet retaining their own customs and identity.

This demonstrated the value they placed on their own cultural heritage and what had been their history. Another good example of this awareness concerning their building types can be inspected in the “Khanegah” area of the settlement where a notable house, known as the home of “Golam Nader Shah”, a dwelling where the Governor of Natanz and Kashan had previously resided, was located. Under “Nayeb Hossein Khan Kashi”, this house comprised three stories and was built in such a way as to view most of the settlement from its balcony to the rear of the building, thereby facing south. Known also as “Khanegah”, the whole precinct was named after this house, due to its pre-eminence.



**Figure 231: The house in Khanegah used by the king's representative.**

Especially for the residents, the details and its decoration, the main entrance and the inner Hashti, especially the plasterwork, were important examples of modernisation during this period.

The balconies with projected or cantilevered floors are of two types. One is the type that is open from one or two sides and the other which is open on all three sides. Usually a prominent house have on average about six opening windows facing south with ventilation shafts in the form of square panels above, with grills.



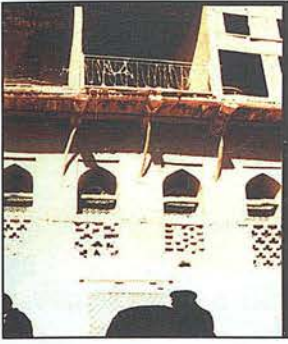


Figure 232



Figure 233

Figures 232-233: Front elevation of Prominent House

Another important unifying element of the settlement, evident in all these different types of buildings, is the overwhelming unity and continuity of the fenestration, one above each other. Each has a different variation in pattern within its framing, and can be observed within an overall multitude of patterns, either glazed or left open for permanent ventilation.

The settlement in its entity is so realised, evolved and integral that new types of building outside its typological growth cannot be made to work satisfactorily and consequently stand out as an alien structure.

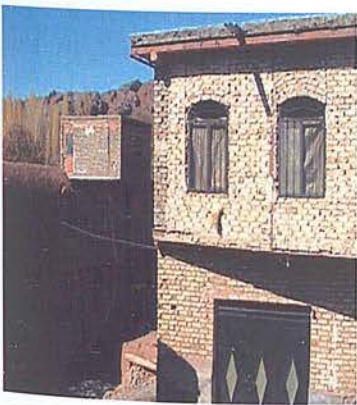


Figure 234



Figure 235

Figures 234-235: Alien structures which stand out. New developments within the inner conservation belt using different building materials.

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From south to north one observes the changing relationship between gardens and orchards as their walls evolve to houses: sometimes attached to nature, then as isolated free standing dwellings, or as semi-detached buildings facing the east-west, on into the alley leading to the river, reforming and changing from being Daroongara to becoming predominantly a Biroongara dwelling, thereby totally integrated in an urban context and void of any vegetation.

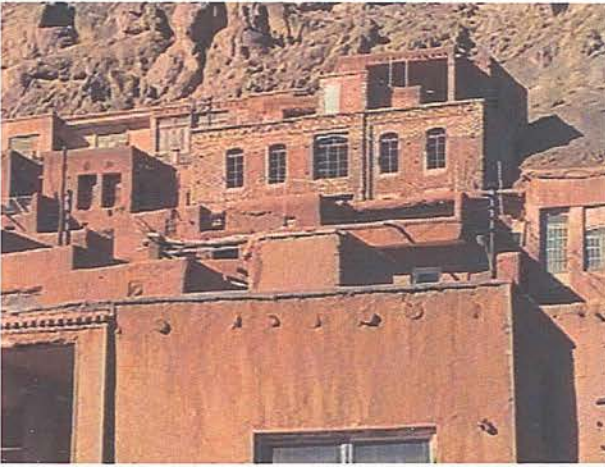


Figure 236: The ascendancy of dwellings from the South to the North.

The non residential buildings have different functions but have commonality in typological form and elements and in terms of integration into the built fabric of the various neighbourhoods. The Jameh mosque with its Shabestan is essentially a Biroongara on three levels, Hosseinieh and the other mosques are all built in the same sense. However the "genius loci" of the village is the Emamzadeh designed with a Daroongara and Biroongara on one side.



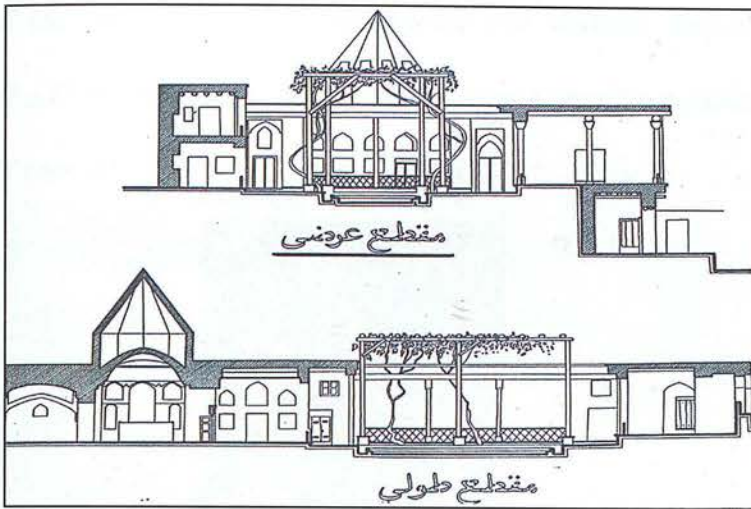


Figure 237: Ziaratgah and its dual identity

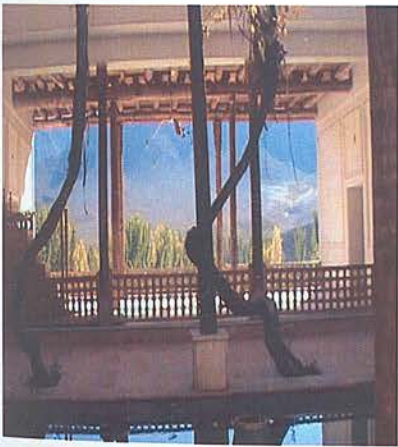


Figure 238



Figure 239

## 5.16 The Emamzadeh

With a pool of water at its centre this is a type of building typical to Iran as a whole and one which is easily recognisable within a national pattern of institutional and private courtyard developments in Islamic Iran.

The houses in this settlement, the patterns of development and the formulation of the zoning of the settlement, all demonstrate the simplicity of life-styles, the subtle



complexity of the people, and the intelligence and wisdom they have shown in making these buildings by bestowing to every space a specific relationship allocated and made very personal to the family occupying it.



**Figure 240: Personalised spaces. Buildings have all been constructed differently in form and character. Drawing along the Rashteh, by the researcher.**

In spaces used for sleeping or as a sitting-room, it is important to note that the functions of the day to day life of a family were usually fulfilled in one room, which contained the source of heating and the bedding, and was also associated with ease of access to the cooking space.

It can be argued that the evolution of the house from the “Single Cell” dwelling started from such a space, which had all the ingredients of living incorporated within.

The complexity of life and its subdivisions led to logical special requirements within a room.

The more complex house featured the sitting room, winter rooms, “Takhoongah” and Summer Rooms “Yort Vahareh”, the last which was the final addition to the typological usage of these buildings. The proportions and interrelationships

harmonising the settlement's scale incorporated factors such as the sizes of the rooms, the entrance doors "Barinjah"<sup>9</sup>, Barkia"<sup>10</sup>, the internal niches and recesses in walls "Taghcheh"<sup>11</sup> and "Pala" and "Dollabha", or "Dollava"<sup>12</sup> which contributed to the overall scale of the evolution and the development of the internal organisation of spaces in relation to the buildings as a whole.

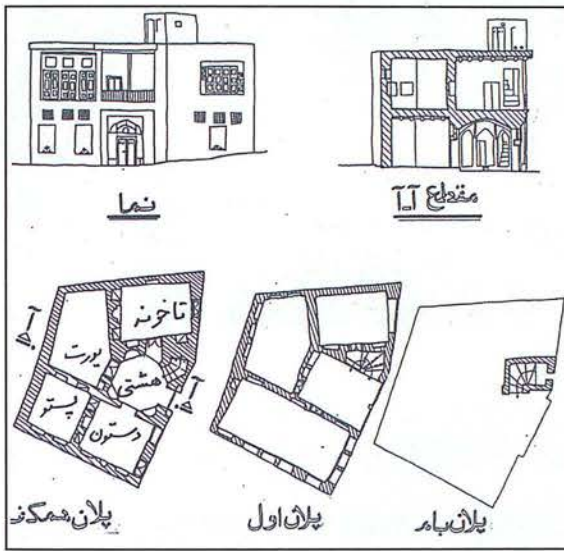


Figure 241: Drawing of the internal organisation of a typical complex house type

The studies carried out realised drawings of the existing building fabric. The houses chosen are prominent building types with a complex organisation and are worthy of a concerted maintenance programme due to their inherent values.

<sup>9</sup> Barinja: Large window /door

<sup>10</sup> Barkia: The main entrance

<sup>11</sup> Taghcheh: Window sill

<sup>12</sup> Dollava or Dollabha: Cupboards, built into the walls, flush with the wall surface.

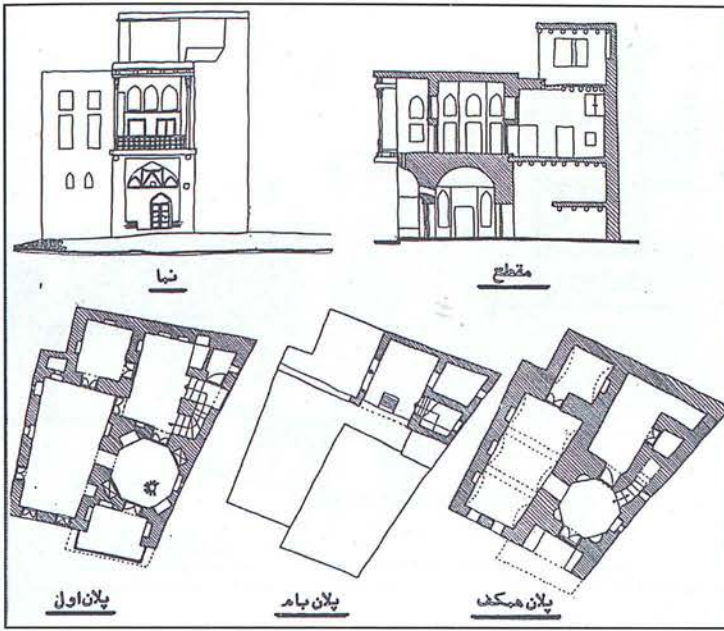


Figure 242: AutoCAD drawing of the listed building: "Zairi's House" in the Paecndeh region of the settlement

The buildings in general are integrated components of the urban landscape, all gathered together in a rhythmic yet seemingly random manner.

The main door and its relationship with the buildings, and the development of an inner corridor or lobby, vary in accordance with their stage of development in the evolution of the settlement. From the lower village Paecndeh to higher up the Pal area, this can be readily observed.



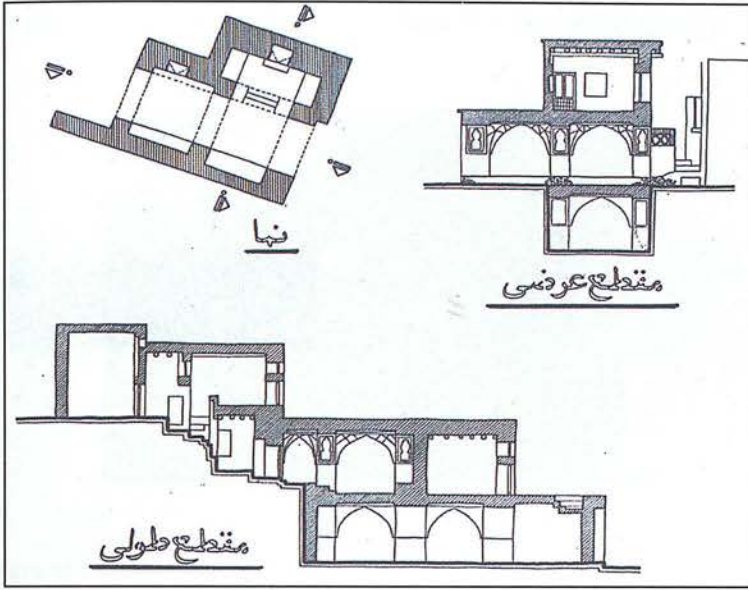


Figure 243: Internal organisation and development of complexity in form: "The Fire Temple as an example".

In most of the complex and well developed house types, the external door opens to inner hallways and perhaps an extended courtyard. If someone has to pass through a variation of this building, immediately after the entrance he will face rooms to the adjacent side and stairs to the first floor.

In order to understand housing in Abianeh, one needs to examine the simple type of dwelling of the earlier periods. Based on the original survey and analyses of the settlement, the original types of dwelling seem to have been of 3x4m, of single storey and all the functions of daily activity took place within it, as noted above.

The essential objects observed were the bedding or "Dasaya", which functioned as cushions during the day, and "Gilim" the hand made woven thin version of the carpet laid on the floor as a rug. Less permanent objects were kept in the recess of the wall or in a corner by the door, such as cooking facilities, shoes etc. In winter the use

o“Corsi”<sup>13</sup> was made as the prime heating source for the entire family.



Figure 244: Picture of a Corsi

The “Mangal”,<sup>14</sup> a container for charcoal and wood, was used for cooking purposes, and prior to that, as an external store or mud brick constructed open fire where barbecues were used. They are still used for main celebrations in the village when there are many to be fed. Most houses retain them, sometimes located on their balcony.

The Corsi is one of the single heating devices still being used in Iran. With its wooden frame covered in bedding, in the center beneath, a heating unit of live coal covered with ash releases the heat gently throughout the cold winter nights. The Corsi provides four sides having a cover capacity of minimum of four people.

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<sup>13</sup> Corsi or Corsi:- A four legged table with a open fire charcoal grill under it and covered it with a thick blanket and the family members sat around it in winter. In this way they kept warm up to their waists and no room heating was required. Dictionary of Moeen vol.3J. p. 2943.

<sup>14</sup> Mangal: A vessel to create heat off the floor with the use of coal. Dictionary of Moeen, p.4404.



Figure 245

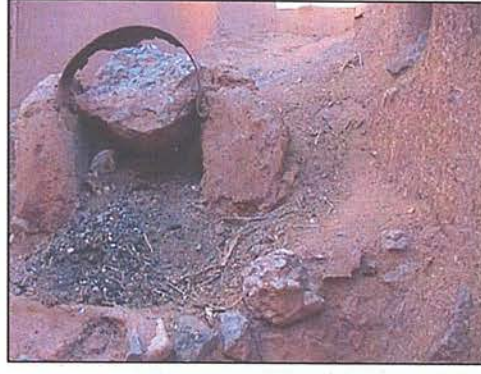


Figure 246

Figures 245-246: Khansaries house and his balcony

In these houses due to a lack of space, the “Tanoor”<sup>15</sup> or “Ojagh”<sup>16</sup> was built outside the house. In areas like “Khanegah”, a bakery was organised to distribute bread throughout the settlement, especially for those unable to make it in the traditional way or unable to undertake it for themselves. In the more developed houses, the cooking was undertaken in the “Vala” or “Dalan”<sup>17</sup> The W.C. was externally located and shared by groups of houses.

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<sup>15</sup> Tanoor: A submerged hollow opening in the earth, excavated and lined with clay, fired with coal and used as an oven to bake bread. *Moeen Dictionary*. vol.1J. p.1156.

<sup>16</sup> Ojagh: Another word for a hollow space between two rocks or hand made mounds between which wood or coal is fired and over which cooking can take place.

<sup>17</sup> Valan or dalan: The area just outside the living space, a hallway, a sheltered space within the house, but not part of a room.



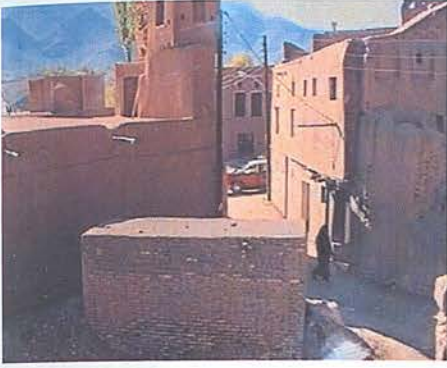


Figure 247



Figure 248

Figures 247-248: Public utility by the Jameh mosque

In the larger, better appointed houses this was located on the ground floor within the dwelling. Water was brought into the house for domestic use and stored in large clay pots. Now small water tanks located at high level provide the domestic supply.

In these small units the door “Barkia” could double up as a long window “Barinja” in the summer and would be left open when the dwelling was occupied. Above the door, a small square light or ventilation opening was incorporated. These two elements were the only openings in the single cell unit and formed the intrinsic characteristic of an elevation while contributing to the identity of the settlement in the form of a signature, readably recognisable as an imprint of the settlement.

Most inhabitants were mostly concerned with creating agricultural and dairy produce. They would construct a room adjacent to the single cell unit to house their storage or “Tavileh” or “Tapoola”<sup>18</sup>.

As the number of animals grew they were taken to a “Kond” or “Zageh”<sup>19</sup>.

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<sup>18</sup> Tavileh or Tapoola: Stables, the place of keeping livestock and their feed.



Figure 249



Figure 250



Figure 251



Figure 252



Figure 253

Figures 249-253: Kond and Kond designs

### 5.17 “Kond” or “Zageh”

Beyond the village, across the river on the higher ground and hillsides there are a number of manmade caverns. Vaulted interiors and gabled entrances with rectangular doors of single leaf construction, these caverns provide the village with the perfect storage for a variety of settlement needs.

The shepherds use the Zageh to safely lock away their sheep at night. Farmers use it to store hay and animal feed for the winter season. Fruit produce, especially apples,

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<sup>19</sup> Kond or Zageh: Storage spaces under the earth for the storage of life stock or local produce. *Understanding the Islamic architecture of Ira*, Memarian, p.:348.



pears and plums, can be safely stored under stable conditions for long periods. Consequently goods can be sent to the markets or stored for later use.

Beasts of burden, mules and donkeys, along with their equipment, could be sheltered in peaceful quarters. The underlying secret to the Zageh's success was the relative isolation and security, and the consistent temperatures obtained within. Through the deployment of a ventilation shaft to the top, they obtain natural ventilation within which kept everything dry and cool. The utility of timber grilles, to prevent egress of falling matter into the chamber from above, also protected any passers-by from accidental falls.

These storage spaces were also built along the route to other towns giving the shepherds protection for their flocks when on their way to markets. These caverns can still be observed along the route from Abianeh to Kashan, Natanz and Isfahan. Indeed twenty-four kilometres away from Abianeh, towards Isfahan, a cave exists which is named "Pari Hool" by the Abianeh people. "Hool", in the Abianeh tongue means cave or cavern. This particular cavern is well known as a landmark in the region.

Located at the bottom of the fort of "Peleh Hamaneh" the need to expand the single cell and to create a composite dwelling leading to a typical house type, was pursued and led to the existence of the two-roomed dwelling. This was characterised by recessed private sleeping areas and brought the functions of storage and cooking, along with the entrance, to the front of the dwelling.

The extension from a single cell, expanded to a double cell, with the cell then having individual and inter-connecting doors was followed by the innovation of one of the rooms having an access to yet another, but smaller cell void of any windows. This was



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used as the "Passtoon"<sup>20</sup>. Later, cells were sunken and the rooms also gained an external link through a "Mahtabi"<sup>21</sup>. In another type, which is characterised by lateral growth, one observes an external space at the front - almost a subdivision of the front room and used as the "Dalan", a hallway or small lobby. Of this type, many examples have become apparent in the settlement following systematic research.

The houses then incorporated a development along the horizontal and lateral planes with an entrance lobby acting as the connecting instrument between the two cells. Gradually one observes with the evolution process, a developing civilisation renders its imprint on the protocol and the complexity of spaces which become multi-layered.

These types then absorbed more complex needs giving rise to more complex permutations and combinations. With the added vertical movement to upper floors via stairs or "Pakeh" and hillsides, negotiating these elements contributed to their role and identities. Occupants no longer relate to corners of room or the entrances of single cells. Now there are sitting rooms, summer rooms, winter rooms, storage rooms, including the larder, silo, granary, stables, and so on. Due to the topography and the climatic conditions, the use of a two-story building was most successful and gradually dominated the settlement.

Topography and the vicinity of the dwellings in relation to their context, to a great deal, determined their typological form in ascending the mountain. With the combination of relatively flat areas and the steep sides of the mountain side, house

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<sup>20</sup> Passtoon: Storage room. A room adjacent to the sitting room which housed the household items, such as bedding, clothing, etc. Dictionary of Moeen vol.4J p.784.

<sup>21</sup> Mahtabi: External balcony. A long, external patio.

types have developed differently in accordance with the falls and steepness of the locale. Facilitating access to upper floors at high level and providing an opportunity to manipulate the falls to create more flat roofs for work and leisure, splitting the dwelling for the summer and winter rooms, and the allocation of rooms to a newly married couple with their own entrance etc. are aspects of this development. We can therefore summarise and group the Buildings of a complex nature can be summarised and grouped in terms of having multiple entrances to the external envelop of the building (Not always the rooms are connected internally, especially in the case of stables). A consequence of the ground slope is a concern for access to the higher rooms on the upper floors and the ability of being able to obtain access from the external pathways at right angle to the main route through the settlement.

It is also fairly obvious that the qualities of character and style developed much later in the process of evolution of building types in Abianeh. The original building represents a stoical form, free from any decoration or changes in the play of facades or interior decoration. In other words, function responds to nature, work and social behaviour gain priority over propriety, richness of building and the implied social or political standing. It follows that the single cells in the form of two single storeys are found to be a lot less 'glamorous' as their 'rivals', the much longer and better-developed houses alongside the main routes through the settlement.

In clarity one observes the evolution of the house through its functional development from a single cell "all in one" space to that of a completely evolved townhouse with its upstairs/downstairs functions clearly defined, separated and placed in accordance with the inhabitants needs (such spaces as, stairs, hallways, corridors, lobbies, summer



rooms, winter rooms, recesses, entrances, water closets, balconies, etc.).

One such dwelling is the house of Mr. "Shafighi" in the heart of Abianeh. The building is located on a hillside. The solution leading to the design of this building overcomes challenges which are extremely well met. The complexity and shapes of the architecture are matched by the classic resting spaces on either side of the main entrances, which in turn leads to a small entrance hall, with the storage to the left and the stairs to the right.

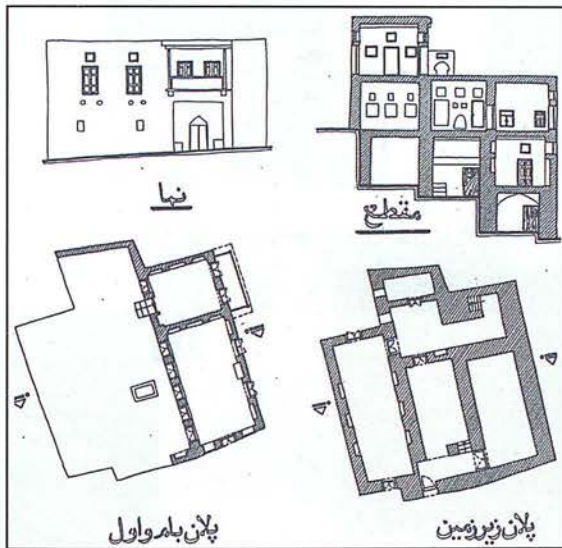


Figure 254: Full detail of the Shafighi house

This building has a half cellar which is accessed through the same stair, built in a crooked irregular spiral fashion. To the rear, due to the fall of the land, a small entrance, from the outside on the first floor landing to the "Mahtabi", is made possible. On the side of this a room featuring two doors with a long external sill is allowed provided next to a room with five decorative doors.

The extant house of "Mr. Safare" is yet another with a completely unique solution.



## Chapter Five

Noting the uniqueness of each house is a common experience when considering this type of architecture, and it is only in the unity of material and character of the buildings that we can summarise the settlement as one unique type of urban form. With an imprint of their own specific details and common features, this then helps in establishing a continuous programme of restoration and revitalisation of the house types and their detailing. This house particularly demonstrates the Safavid influence in its splendour.



Figure 255



Figure 256



Figure 257



Figure 258

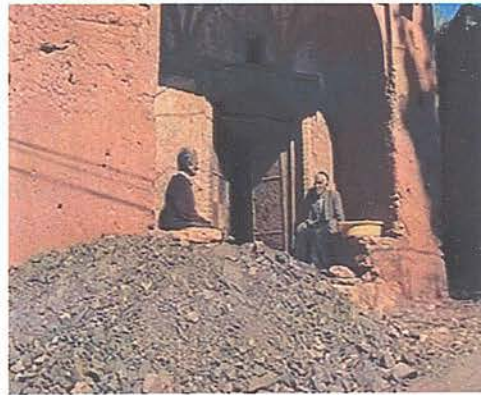


Figure 259

Figures 255-259: Full detail Images and Drawings of the Safare house.

The house is located to the rear of the Ziaratgah in the older sector of the settlement. Its location is such that from the “Pishgah Khaneh”, the main entrance of the house,



Figure 260: Unique doorway to the house.

one can view through an open section of the Rashteh, an excellent panoramic view of the fields and the vast natural landscape beyond. It is located at the head of an unusual row of housing at right angles to the main route through the settlement, facing the open land beyond and a natural open spring below, itself framed by some well established "Chenar" specimens. This lends stature and presence to the setting of the house. The architect of the building has exploited the maximum use of space within the dwelling, so much so that there is hardly any defined circulation within it at all. The landing, the patios and walls, floors and ceiling have all absorbed so many in-built functions that one is astounded by the complexity and utility of the interiors as a complex series of practical and aesthetic architectural elements incorporated within one dwelling. The house is built on two and a half floors to the front and nearly four to the rear. At the ground floor entrance the visitor observes the same seating and reveals, the semi-domed entrance and hints of frescos which could well have been undertaken by a master painter such as Reza Abbasi of the Safavid period, or one of his students. Stepping through the threshold the visitor admires a two



leaved door, which is in itself a marvel of craftsmanship and demonstrates the immense intelligence and skill of the craftsmen of the period. Constructed in timber of hundreds of small pieces joined together in a dry technique, yet as strong and flexible to have lasted for centuries, the door features complex geometrical patterns such as herringbone.

Beyond the threshold of the building is the lobby or "Hashti". It leads the visitor to the stairs connecting the lower end and higher areas of the house, from the other side to a bauble room. On the first floor between the hall or "Kia", several spaces are located: to the north is the kitchen, on the half-landing the granary and store, "Tapoohaye Gandomi". In the west, a sitting room has been separated by two pilasters supporting an arch which leads to a substantial grain silo or "Chilou". Adjacent to it is the bread oven "Tanoor" and a recess for storage. There is another room accessed from this space and the main hall which is octagonal in shape. In the room are three entrances, two cupboards and two corners as recessed niches, one of which was intended for a wall heater. This room was designed in the same style as the Palace of Aliqapoo Music room in Isfahan<sup>22</sup> The roof is constructed from timber and is an example of the master carpenters' craftsmanship of the day, in a criss-cross pattern. In this way, the master carpenters fashioned the finishes to have both structural and aesthetic quality.

The balcony "Pishgah" is of excellent design with supporting columns having a capital "Tongan", base and shaft made neo-Islamic in decoration. On the "Tofolha"<sup>23</sup>

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<sup>22</sup> Aliqapoo: This was the palace of Shah Abbas the Great and was the most prominent feature of the main square of Nagshejahan in 17<sup>th</sup> century Isfahan, then the capital city of Iran.

<sup>23</sup> Tafol: small pieces of timber which are used for roof coverings, also in other parts of the building typically used for decorative reasons.



one would also observe timber engravings. From the first floor landing “Kia” access was made to the roof level through a stair, in the middle of which a small room “Dargari”<sup>24</sup> for storage was located. Finally on the top of the roof itself a further room, adjacent to the stairs and accessed through a “Soffe”,<sup>25</sup> could be found.

This house therefore represented an artistic uniqueness which, even in Abianeh, reflected a highly personalised, idealistic, rich and profound statement of taste, culture and the status of its owner and its time. In other words houses, regardless of their location and growth, embodied a permutation and combination of influences and a unique series of interrelationships of the spaces, individual elements and the environment which, in total, formed an irreplaceable fusion of body parts of the whole building. Furthermore houses, like that of Safareh, demonstrate the complexity to which the single cell unit has evolved. This also demonstrates a typological ascendancy and cultural development which can visually be traced back to the years of its realisation. The underlining elements of design are concerned with the location and the condition of the physical setting, allied with the taste of the owners and their status in the settlement.

If the house of “Mr. Safareh” can be considered unique, so should the house of “Mrs Kazagholi”<sup>26</sup>, a lady of high social standing and highly respected in the settlement.

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<sup>24</sup> Dargari: A room which was located in the path of the stair off a half landing leading to the roof area, for storage.

<sup>25</sup> Soffe: Iwan.

<sup>26</sup> Kazagholi : A lady of high standing who lived in Abianeh over 150 years ago and was renowned for her blue eyes. The word Kazagholi means “The Blue Eyed Lady”.



Figure 261: Façade detail, the house of Mrs. Kazem Hgoli

This building was larger than the previous and benefited from a wider north facing facade along the Rashdeh adjacent to a public gathering area, located near the main Abanbar in the heart of the settlement. The house sat on the largest storage space for this type of housing, occupying the complete ground floor, and characterised by elegant perforated windows constructed from brick rather than timber, and known as “Fakhrodeen”<sup>27</sup> In this house one observes more ambitious and refined designed spaces. This house was clearly influenced by the Safavid period with regard to its entrances and internal decoration.

Amongst the most prominent dwellings, and a type in its own right, which stands comparison with that of the previous door and window arrangement, is the “Chahar-Sofeh”<sup>28</sup> For this house type, there are a number of variations. This house comprised single cell dwellings with four corners of the rectangular cells meeting and resulting in a cruciform open interior space. In other parts of Iran also, this type has been

<sup>27</sup> Fakhrodeen: Open and filled window, a framework of brickwork with a pattern which produced 50% opening and 50% closure, hence providing privacy, light and ventilation.

<sup>28</sup> Chahar-Sofeh:



## Chapter Five

widely used with the exception of the inner courtyard, hence making the building “Daroongara” or inward looking. The use of a ceiling finish referred to as “Ahang”<sup>29</sup> and “Kolombeh”<sup>30</sup> lends the building a totally different appearance and character, quite unlike the rest of Abianeh. The interesting issue about this type of building is the way it has been adopted to become yet another component of the building fabric under the ‘great veil’ of the settlement.



Figure 262: View of the Chahar-Sofeh house type

Previously we have referred to ‘Chahar-Sofeh’ dwellings as comprising the most profound and identifiable building type in existence in Abianeh. However like the other buildings, it also grew and developed into a complex house type with intricacy and hierarchy. It was not imported as a building type with all its components intact. This point is an important observation made to emphasise the special embracing of foreign elements into the canon of Abianeh’s architecture only as essential

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<sup>29</sup> Ahang: The cover to walls. A type of half domed roof. Understanding Islamic Architecture Memarian, p.375.

<sup>30</sup> Kolombeh: A skin covering the roof in the shape of half-dome ‘Understanding Islamic Architecture’, Memarian p.384.



characteristics, and only as and when required. Otherwise the development of the settlement was natural and the urban fabric grew organically, just as cells grow from cells.

This type of dwelling is seen throughout Iran, especially in the central region, but in no place does it absorb the variations and characteristics that are apparent in Abianeh. The nature of Heterotopia is that no section or element is exactly the same. It is a continuous, inventive and creative form, as nature is found to be. The house of "Ashrafzadeh" presents yet another interesting form and internal organisation, which require attention. In the Pakhongah area of the settlement one of the most interesting and complex houses of this entire region, can be found. This house and others in the neighbourhood reveal a very interesting characteristic concerning the location and suitability of the houses to their owners. The houses were in effect tailored for their owners.

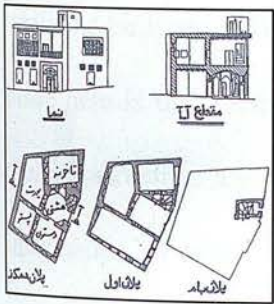


Figure 263



Figure 264

Figure 263-264: Survey of Ashrafzadeh's house

Although it does not have a large floor area, this house incorporates more than the inherent functions of most houses. This house has nine sides and all are facing different directions. The design presents a perfect example of blending environmental, contextual and functional considerations, in relating their effects on the brief and the needs of an individual. In this house the lobby plays an important part in linking

various spaces together. On the ground floor it has access to three rooms and the staircase. The three rooms are inter-related by the use of doors. Two of the rooms were the winter rooms, while the others were the “Pastoon” or “Dastoon” used for storage. On the first floor the stair opens up to a hallway. One room is at the same level of this hallway the other three are four steps above this level, “Yortehari” and sitting room “Mehmankhaneh” both having a “Pishgah” or balcony. The arrangement in this level allows circulation through the rooms and the kitchen space in between. This house, with its unique non-parallel sides and irregular shapes and forms, demonstrates a true architectural mind and genius at work. Its complexity is as intricate as most advanced buildings of the highest order. This house therefore demonstrates a microcosm of design thinking, which reflects the generic effect of a continuous inventive creation of form, while taking into account the climate and the local culture and needs. This results in a solution which can only be realised in situ while the building is being developed and built. Therefore the observation which can be made here is that in this settlement’s dwellings truly evolved and developed during their construction and contextual relationship with their boundaries and the owners’ imagination of what their buildings need to be and to provide. The legacy is a magnificent relationship between man and his environment while exhibiting a true contextual design.

In these buildings the forms of construction are well integrated with details which are sensitive yet utilitarian - from the waterproofing quality of the roof finish, the mud reinforced hay and straw, to the exquisite balcony construction “Pishgah” and its balustrade “Maajjar” connecting various rooms at first floor while providing an additional space above street level. The complete and complex versions of this



approach can be observed in the houses of Safare, Ashrafzadeh and Shafigh, i and hence should be regarded as models for restoration of similar dwellings in the neighbourhood.

In Iran in general it has traditionally been the institutional public buildings, especially religious buildings, which after Islam became a dominant feature of most settlements.

In Abianeh this also is apparent. However the 'urban blanket' that covers Abianeh is more dominant than its counterparts elsewhere, thereby creating an eternal identity for itself. Therefore neither from studying the skyline nor from the finishes nor from the building types can the observer readily tell which building is the mosque or the Ziaratgah or, indeed, the dominant house type. This observation is crucial in understanding the people and their social structure. The unity of the people and their life-style, as noted above, are so deeply rooted in their day to day living embracing a sense of unity, that govern all. This can be understood as a kind of 'true socialism', a behaviour and culture which neither alienated the poor from the wealthy, nor created a problem within the settlement. The researcher contends that the inner secret and the genius loci of Abianeh are at one with this unity. This is illustrated in their uniform clothing, housing, work, religion, social life and communal laws, each made available to one and all, and all of which transcribes into the very spirit of the settlement.

In the Jameh mosque one observes the "Biroongara" style of building, even though it is an inward looking and operating building. The intention is to make the building conform to the collective whole. The "Ziaratgah" which has a dual identity of being "Biroongara" to one side and "Daroongara" to three sides, has an internal courtyard and pond. Together with its skyline characterised by the hexagonal-style dome above the actual shrine of the two sons of the imams, executed in a glorious turquoise, it still



does not exhibit the visual strength of dominating the overall skyline and context of the settlement. Consequently the average man of Abianeh can always reflect upon own domestic Apollonian<sup>31</sup> structure, its form and unity, in spite of the great periodic overturning of cultural and political influences throughout the country as a whole. In recalling the classical associations of, say Dionysus, the god of wine, music and dance, in formulating an inner beauty peculiar to this settlement, this again demonstrating the intelligence and the amazing sense of self-preservation that Abianeh's people possess.

### 5.18 Architectural Merits and Features

As established above, the essential elements of construction for buildings was to be in timber for the roof structure and columns, and mud brickwork for walls while finishes were executed in plaster on a hay reinforced clay, either "Red or Yellow".

From the Safavid period there are design influences affecting interiors where vaulted ceiling techniques were adopted and used specifically on a few buildings only:

The fire temples, the entrance to the Jameh mosque, the entrances to several of the prominent residential buildings, Ziaratgah of Abianeh. However the fundamental structural rules and principles of the semi-domed or domed roof is completely alien to Abianeh's original flat and rectangular forms. So the majority of such constructions are actually cosmetic and do not follow the rules of construction that were originally formulated elsewhere; that is to say: to transmit the loads from above as compressive force and disperse it through walls or columns to a foundation, while articulating this

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<sup>31</sup> Apollo: The God of the sun, plastic arts, strength of things, according to Greek mythology.

process on the façade as it was originally carried in the classical period. Here we are dealing with columns and beams and simple load bearing walls, construction only. The method of construction therefore was based on the traditional ways. This can be summarised as follows:

- a. The existing top soil would be removed in order to reach the hard surface below, usually about 40-50 cm, in some cases almost directly upon the mountain rocks.
- b. Then a foundation footing would be prepared from a mixture of local stone "Sangchin" and laid directly on the mountain surface after digging a key as a impression into the rock to act as a stop in case of sliding on the surface. The workers were technically aware, ensuring that the foundation was waterproofed against the rain and inclement weather, by careful selection of the footings and preparing with the natural falls.
- c. The stone construction above the ground level would be extended to ensure an all round protection against splash backs and rising damp. This would be in parallel and equal to the width of the wall, but not usually less than 500mm above ground level.
- d. The walls were then extended to the full height of the building in mud brick construction with an infill of timber columns, allowing for window and door openings using structural timber beams. In the more contemporary buildings, bricks with a facing finish to match the existing have been used.
- e. For a two-story building, the width of the walls is usually about 600-800mm at ground level. This decreases as the building ascends to the roof level; thereby exerting less pressure from the upper floors while distributing the loads in a pyramidal fashion. The walls were built with the timberwork within them. This means that they were constructed and taken up at the same time as a combined system of structure and



cladding, thereby demonstrating a real understanding of the craft of construction.

f. This process was consistent throughout, covering all aspects of the building from foundation to the ground floor level and installation of sills, door frames, lintels, beams, cantilevers, for portico fronts and balconies, and any special doubling of the structural zone as permitted for first floor beams and so on. This arguably demonstrates a sense of structural and constructional awareness which is being practised in the world today even with the most modern materials, the archetypal process is essentially the same.

g. The structure of the walls combined primary members and secondary members. One essentially supported the vertical loading, the other the lateral loads while allowing for walls to be built on top of beams imbedded in walls in order to distribute the loading evenly as an edge beam. This was an ingenious solution for walls as brittle as clay, which can act in compression while performing poorly in tension.

h. The roofs were constructed from beams of 250 to 300mm, edge to edge, spaced 350 to 450mm centres. This spacing and the girth of timber was adjusted depending on the spans required and the size of the room. The spacing for larger areas could be extended to 600-700mm. These would be boarded with flat pieces of timber, backed with layers of "Chezeh" or wild bushes covered with mild clay. This would be levelled with a layer of clay and finished in 3-4 coats of hay reinforced clay for waterproofing and added strength. This may be the earliest example of our modern day "Fuller Bloch system" of beams and filler blocks, used in almost seventy percent of modern domestic building construction today.



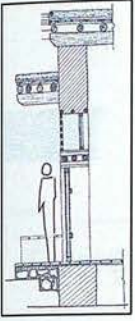


Figure 265

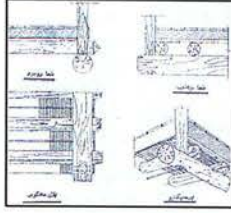


Figure 266

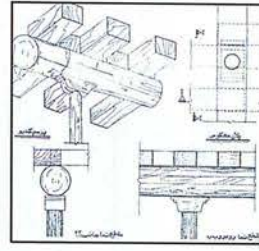


Figure 267

Figure 265-267: Building process and details

The columns were known as “Balarha”,<sup>32</sup> or the load bearing columns, and the filler beams known as “Foresb”<sup>33</sup>.

In the Ziaratgah, the roof beams are 400-500 mm apart. They span a longer distance and the beams are of much wider girth than the typical residential beams. This demonstrates an awareness in relating the relevant strength with an acceptable structural span, a convention achieved by experience while taking into account the original tree, its age and weathering, drying, possible treatments, and so on.

The wild bushes or “Chezeh” were used for insulation and for retaining the clay by inhibiting it from draining through, during the process of application, typically involving different layers of the mixture of clay rendering.

<sup>32</sup> Balar: Man-made beams used for the purposes of expanding the length of the building and resting on walls. To bear the secondary beams and loads from above. *Dictionary of Dehkhoda*, p.3679.

<sup>33</sup> Foresb: Timber pieces used to cover the roof width. *Dictionary of Dehkhoda*, p.1557.

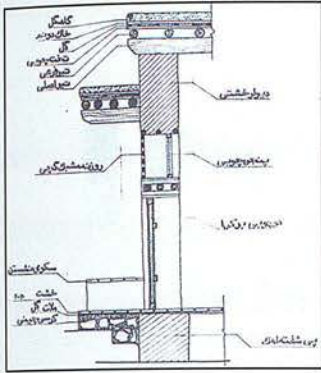


Figure 268

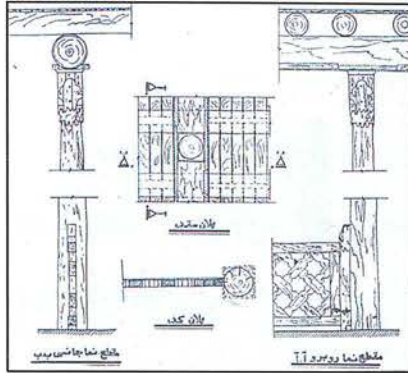


Figure 269

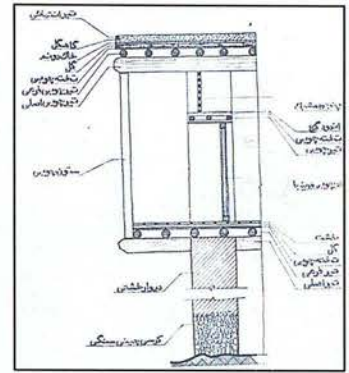


Figure 270

Figures 268-270: Sections thro' the roof and beam spacing showing where the clay has bedded through.

In some cases, after the roof beams, boarding and bushes were in position, several coats of hay reinforced clay, up to 200-300mm deep in a criss-cross application, were installed on top as the final cladding and finish. This process involved leaving the hay and red clay to ferment and mature over a two to three day period, while ensuring it was kept well consolidated and mixed. Through a process known as "Malidan", the art of walking on clay, as the Greeks and Romans did with grapes, which was no kneed it like bread making a mixture which became red like blood and consolidated like dough and strong like concrete.

In the cases of complications and variations, ingenious techniques also were applied. The "Chahar-Sofeh" dwelling due to its open roof and wide spaces, posed one such case, where the norm could not be applied. Hence larger spans were to be achieved. Consequently the spaces were broken up by beams set at 45 degrees, balancing the areas most vulnerable while forming an edge beam to the opening and linking the edge beam to the main beams and their secondary 45 degree beams. Thus the loads

were distributed while a large structural span and suitable openings were achieved.

The “Pishkom” was a kind of balcony or cantilevered covered projection above the entrance also known as the “Pishgah”. The balcony probably evolved through extending the balustrade handrail at first floor level - still visible in some dwellings - to achieve an external extension to the hall’s landing on the first floor.



Figure 271



Figure 272



Figure 273



Figure 274

Figures 271-274: Photographs of Pishkom or Pishgah in Abianeh

This was a space which proved to be extremely valuable later in its various functions, as noted above. The construction therefore was just as important as the rest of the building. To achieve longer lasting balconies, the original balcony also featured a number of shoring members supporting its beams and columns at 45 degrees (“known as Kolpa”<sup>34</sup>) to the vertical wall below.

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<sup>34</sup> Kolpa: Kol= short, pa = shoring base, a shoring under a balcony or canopy above doorways. *Understanding Islamic Architecture*, Memarian, p.384.



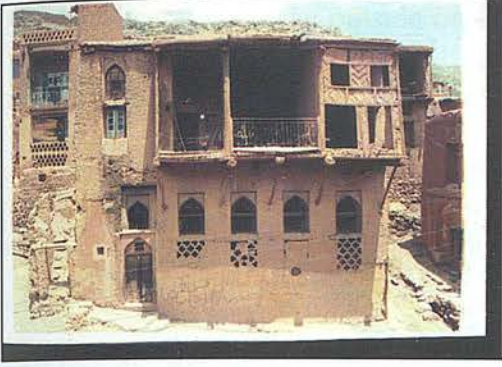


Figure 275

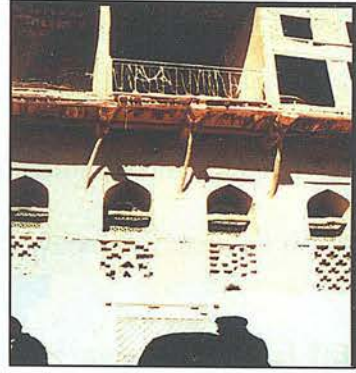


Figure 276

**Figures 275-276: Shoring to Pishgah**

Hence the loading was transferred to the wall below, putting less strain on the horizontal beams to the balcony, while demonstrating a deep understanding of the distribution of loads. The projected portico, above the entrance door, is another kind of “Pishkom”<sup>35</sup> or “Konsul” and one which has given rise to yet another function. It can be considered a member of the essential building design elements, which architecturally, in aspiration and function, appears very primitive and raw, almost a type in making.

Sheltering the inhabitants like an umbrella against the rain, the snow or the intensive sun, at the entrance to the dwelling, this element was constructed exactly the same as the balcony in structure, but in a miniature way, invariably the main structure of which is an extension of the internal floor beams or secondary beams picking up the Pishkom's beams at half landing level. The Hosseinieh building close to the Ziaratgah is a classic case of this type, but in a larger, more dominant way.

<sup>35</sup> Peshkam: A kind of balcony, which is enclosed on three sides. A hallway covered and opened on one side. ‘Knowing Islamic Architecture’, Memarian, p.377.

The halls accessible to the outside on one side only were called “Dar Pashkon”. This occurred when a space was made that was sandwiched between two walls. Balconies were realised therefore wherever it was naturally possible, in all manner of shapes and size. However in style and construction the principal features remained the same.

### 5.19 The Remains of Historical Buildings of Special Interest

The urban fabric and network of buildings, the historic routes and building forms operate collectively as a ‘gravitational pull’ on the settlement as a whole. The macrocosm of Abianeh in its entirety is unique and historically of great importance within Iran. The old houses, the typological process and the development of the settlement gave rise to such buildings as the mosques, the Ziaratgah, the forts, the fire temples, the Temple of Hinza, and many others alongside the mountains to the south. This point to the unique quality of this settlement and its variety of forms and functions which contributed to an expression of civilisation imbedded in the built fabric. This message is conveyed down the years through the media of their literature, poetry, records, dates, beliefs, calligraphy on doors, ceilings, and so on. In turn this substantiates the historical and evolutionary importance of the settlement as a whole. It is worth, therefore, to look at few of these vernacular gems briefly and in more detail: -



Figure 277



Figure 278



Figure 279





Figure 280



Figure 281



Figure 282

### Figures 277-282: Chahar Taghi, the fire temple and its details

The “Chahar Taghi” or fire temple is positioned along the “Rashteh” and was known as the “Temple of Harpak”<sup>36</sup> Located in the “Yousman” area of the settlement; the structure of this unique landmark accommodates the public route at ground floor, and forms a pendentive above four piers, supporting a flat roof above. This is most unusual as the pendentive might be better developed by utilising a ring beam or drum to equally distribute the loads and prevent any tendency for the four legs of the pendentive to collapse. Most Renaissance buildings used the pendentive to ultimately support a dome.

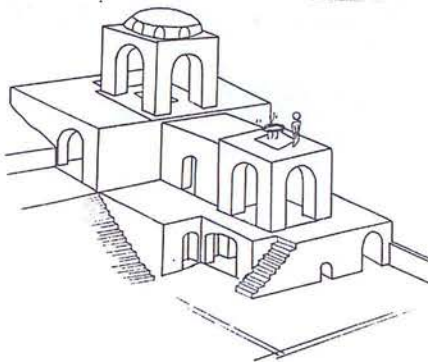


Figure 283: Pendentive drum and dome, construction sketch.

<sup>36</sup> The Fire Temple of Harpak: after Maxim Sero, archaeologist, before 1979.



However on this occasion the dome is actually transcribed into a fan vaulting below the flat roof, now decorated in the Islamic neo-Safavid style. What stops the building from collapsing is the adjoining dwellings, acting as bookends, and containing the lateral thrust.

Materials used in this building include red clay, lime and chalk, arguably significant clues as to its construction principles and a likely dating to the Sassanid era.

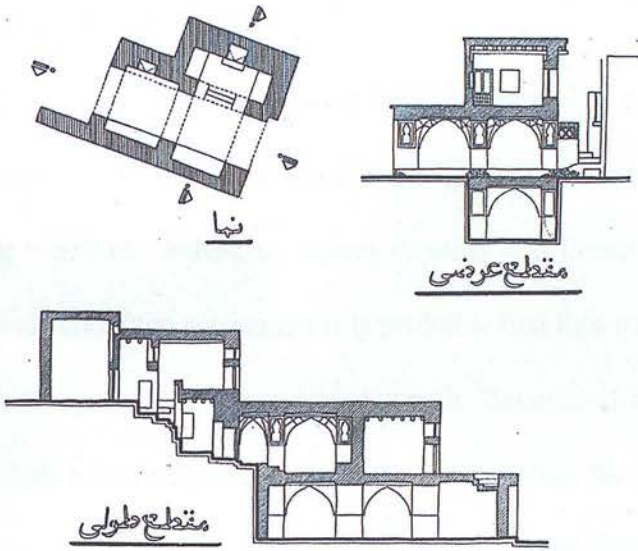


Figure 284: Detail drawings of the fire temple

This building has undergone many changes and currently is owned by more than three private local owners. Used as storage below the street level, it is currently used to keep animal feed and agricultural equipment. On top there is a single room, now the property of the National Heritage Agency of Iran and a public passage on ground floor is located alongside the “Rashteh”, forming an underpass. This steps up to a new

section used as residence on the north side, previously the local library accessed from the street level. Oral tradition states that in the village there was a collection of handwritten books of great value located there at one time. Sadly, all have disappeared through time. However Chahar tag and "Bazoobadi", the fluting which forms the edges of the vaulted ceiling, are delicately interpreted as if a Safavid restoration while lending the vaulting character and style to the underside.

### 5.20 The Fire Temple of Harshogah

This fire temple is located to the far east of the village and is in a ruinous condition, with raw nature reclaiming the locality.

Not much from this building is widely known or recognisable or ever recorded. Only the memories of the people who had seen it in its 'prime' have been imperfectly retained by their descendents, before the heavy weather and floods finally claimed it.

Located in the oldest part of the settlement it is probable that this was one of the initial buildings of real historical value erected in Abianeh. Because it was not apparently central to the population and not topographically well located, the urban fabric of the settlement grew away from the building and they were never integrated. Due to the building's proximity to the natural landscape, the ingress of vegetation also contributed to a rapid demise in the material form of the structure. It certainly appears older than the Temple of Harpak and was obviously in use before nature claimed it.

However, it is hoped by the researcher that archaeologists in Iran take such ruins seriously and record their existence while further investigating their architectural and archaeological details, hence cultural relevance.



### 5.21 The Mosque of Hajatgah

To the west of the settlement, just outside the main gates beyond the school grounds, and close to the water mill, stands an isolated building. It sits firmly at high level to the main route leading to the irrigation fields and the orchards adjacent to the settlement's main graveyard, taking the name of the "Mosque of Hajatgah". A curious building, unlike all others, it is detached from the main core of life and the ongoing architectural discourse discovered as the underlying generic rule of the settlement. There are other buildings that are totally separate, such as the Hinza temple in the mountains or the water mill, both of which have functions not associated with everyday life of the settlement, only occasional use. The Mosque however is an integral part of the settlement and probably should have been integrated within the main body of the settlement. Such an observation requires clarification.

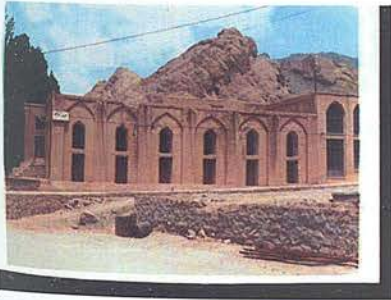


Figure 285



Figure 286

Figures 285-286: the mosque of Hajatgah

This building is notably different from the other mosques in the settlement and is more spacious, with high ceilings. Sitting on a partially man-made platform five steps above the street level in a kind of mixture of styles, it faces south and is open on three sides, with the rear abutting the mountainside. In essence therefore a



detached building quite unusual for the region.

It comprises two sections. The "Shabestan" is located to the east of the building, its rear facing a small inner courtyard with a pond - an architectural setting not like any other in Abianeh. The second part is at a split level from the Shabestan about two metres lower than ground level. It has two access points, one from the Shabestan and one from the front. Inside there are designated locations for male and female praying areas. A tombstone on the corner wall of this mosque dates it to 974H.G.

(1595AD) this date is highly unlikely to be correct for the building as the latter's typological sources and eclecticism demonstrate a much earlier period than the Safavid era. It is likely that the tombstone was part of the graveyard and the building expanded, while incorporating some parts of the graveyard. This is plausible, as it is not at all customary to have people buried inside mosques in this region, unless, of course, they incorporate a shrine or Ziaratgah, dedicated private or public tombs, which this was obviously not.

This building was built with the topography and one of its fascinations is the way the existing ground is adapted to various functions within the building. The function of the mosque was at one time to store the dead before burial. Storage space was provided for the settlement's communal items and its use as a mosque, for rituals associated with the burial ceremony. Materially it is interesting to note that the Shabestan's floor in this mosque is made of earth whereas the others elsewhere were constructed of timber. This also reflects modernity in keeping with the contemporary buildings of the same period. Attached to the Shabestan there are two rooms dated 953(1574AD) and 921H.G. (1542) referring to the Safavid period. It is probable that these doors were part of the original cell set up in this location and have been reused

in the Shabestan space during the "King Esmail" of the Safavid era. Further evidence of restoration and changes to this building resulting in expansion of the mosque to the east side are contained in the calligraphy on the ceiling. The inhabitants have dated verses from the holy Koran with 1114H.G.(1735AD). This observation dates the building to "King Hossein" of the Safavid era.

It is important to note that it was customary before the advent of electricity to use oil lamps and mosques were no exception. The use of oil lamps at nights explains why dark surfaces can be readily observed in most of the public buildings. Where plaster was used to provide a decorative finish to wall surfaces, this use of oil lamps is most apparent<sup>37</sup>.

A poem inscribed on the entrance door states:

**"If life besots you, favours take what you can, but not what does not belong to you. Dated: 1114 H.G.(1735AD)"**

It is interesting that this building has not responded to the ingress of moisture like other dwellings, especially in the women's section of the mosque. This demonstrates the different technique of construction used. In fact in style we notice that the fenestration to the south has been realised in closer keeping with the settlement ideologies, yet is completely different on other sides. The east facade is in an arched form, of double height which seems to replicate the Safavid play of brickwork here but imitated in the traditional material of reinforced mud. In its totality, this dwelling

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<sup>37</sup>It is said that the reason for the timber never rotting or having termites is because of the use of oil lamps and fire in the dwellings: a local theory and opinion of the inhabitants.



is a good example of a typical building conceived for a very special function which had to be located outside the settlement adjacent to the grave yard. Hence it was intended to be visited occasionally and could not have been the part of the urban whole. Its proportion, style and growth are outside the norm. The inhabitants cared more for the function of this building than its impact on the surroundings, or indeed its style. Consequently at the time it was realised, it would have been totally isolated, cold and rhetorical, not unlike it is today.

### 5.22 The Jameh Mosque

Comfortably blended into the heart of the settlement in the area known as the “Miandeh” to the east of Porzaleh Mosque, is located the Jameh or Friday mosque. The mosque comprises two stories: one story is the basement or “Sardabeh” and the upper floor is the main “Shabestan” or main prayer room.



Figure 287



Figure 288

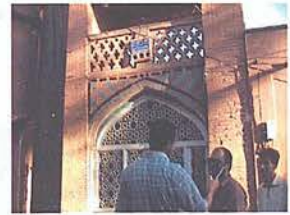


Figure 289



Figure 290



Figure 291

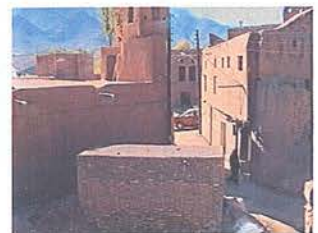


Figure 292

Figures 287-292: Jameh Mosque



The basement, Sardabeh, has two doors - one leading to the Shabestan upstairs and the other to the north route above it. The dimensions of the room are about 10x7metres. There is raised roof

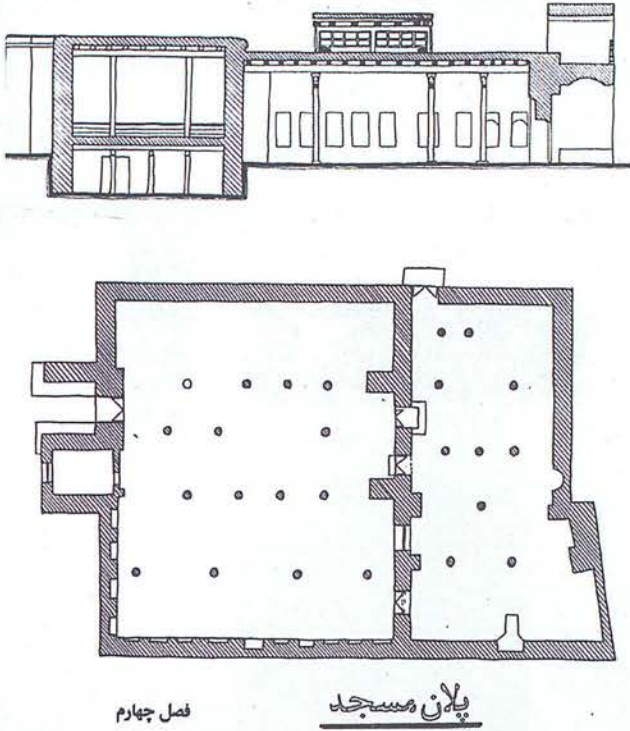


Figure 293



Figure 294

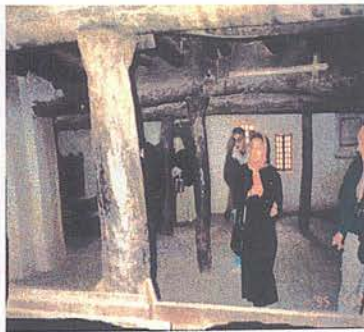


Figure 295



Figure 296

or a form of clerestory lighting made for the central zone, to allow daylight into the room. A series of wooden columns supports the ceiling in the Sardabeh. In this room a

wooden Mehrab exists which is intricately decorative and dated. Its has verses of “Yasin”<sup>38</sup> in “Kuffi” writing with flowers and decorative features dated to 776H.G (1397BC) and executed by Molana Azalodeen, the son of Molana Bahaodeen. The mehrab extends to a full height of two metres and a width of one metre. A skin of protective glass, added by the national heritage agency in recent years, shields it from damage. Next to this mehrab is a wooden “Mambar” of an earlier period dated 466H.G.(1087AD) and has inscribed on it in Kufi script the following verse:- “Fi al heram snnateh sata va setin va arbaa maa rahmollah men garara va nazara”<sup>39</sup>



Figure 297: Arabic writing on the Mambar of the Jameh Mosque.

Translation:

Adjacent to the entrance of this mosque, there exists a primitive minaret with a rectangular form. It is used for summoning the faithful and for broadcasting the

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<sup>38</sup> Yasin: One of the sections of the holy Koran.

<sup>39</sup> Lotfollah Honarfar, A wealth of historical remains of Isfahan Engravings, Isfahan, vol.2, 1344, p.888.

prayers. The “Goldasteh” or entrance is accessible from within the mosque. This mosque is in a true style of the settlement and has no courtyards. The Shabestan is about fifteen by twelve and a half metres. The roof, columns and floors are all executed in the traditional constructional method, with a touch of eclecticism expressed on the capitals to the column.

As with other mosques in the same area, the roof trusses and boarding have many inscriptions and writing dating the building history including the repairs carried out.

One such inscription dates the building to the eighteenth century, to the era of Nadershah-e-Afshar:

**In the name of God, in the year of one thousand one hundred and fifty one (1772AD). In the reign of His Highness of the highest and the soldiers of good fortune. Of the world and the worldly, set to conquer India and expand the kingdom within three years. (This is) the work of carpentry and painting decoration by Mehdi Khalefeh, peace be on him. Molla Mohammed Abianeh 1151 (1772AD).**

In another location to the north of the Jameh mosque a further inscription is found which also refers to Nader Shah and his son Reza Gholi, King Tahmaseb and Sultan Hossein Noorollah 1152 (1773AD).

It must be stated that inscriptions on roof boards and beams are not specific to Abianeh. All the villages in the region, including the mosques at Hanjan Konjan, and especially Barzerood and Tareh, along with the Imamzadeh at Barzerood, obey the same rules and traditions of passing knowledge and history of the places in this way. Each records dates and key events, changes, restorations, and so on.

In the north-east of the mosque another inscription was found, which refers to king



Tahmaseb and is dated 1152H.G (1773AD). Some of the damaged items of the mosque, such as a wooden Mambar dated 543H.G (1164AD) is still kept in storage. The front entrance door, which in the past has been a victim of theft but, thankfully, and has been recovered, is dated 1310H.G. (1931AD).



**Figure 298: The front door to the Jameh Mosque**

All in all there are many eclectic features in this mosque, such as the way daylight is introduced through raised roof lighting, an addition made in the Safavid period. Tiling to different sections of the floor or locating a butcher's shop to a section at the front entrance, indicate that the mosque was divided at some point to accommodate external spaces. Some rooms, previously used as internal storage for the mosque were converted to an external space facing the Rashteh. Happily, this space has recently been rented out to a traditional jewellery maker and silversmith. This is in keeping with the traditional crafts of the region and the settlement; a positive move made by the independent sector, in bringing back an old craft.



Figure 299



Figure 300

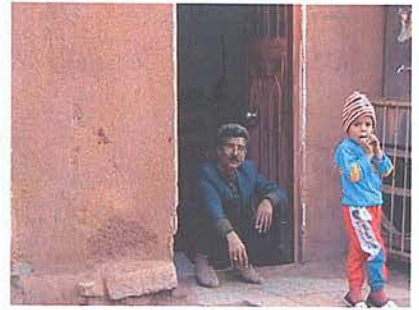


Figure 301

Figures 299-301: The Jewellery shop in the body of the Jameh mosque

Silver jewellery made in Abianeh before its demise as a craft in the settlement

(Picture by: Kamran Jebraili 1988, Express, Tehran- Iran).

### 5.23 The Mosque of Porzaleh



Figure 302

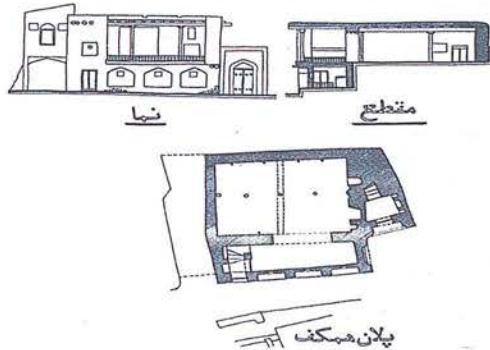


Figure 303

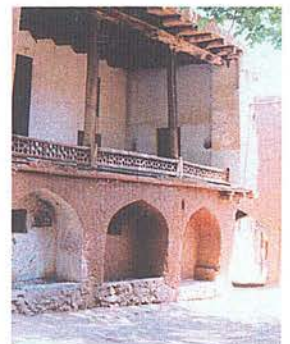


Figure 304

This mosque is located in the middle of the “Miandeh” district, along the Rashteh in one of the oldest and most important neighbourhoods of the settlement. It follows the



true constructional method of Abianeh, has been built in two stories and is the best of the well-proportioned buildings in Abianeh.

The ground floor lobby is at the same level as the lower room and the Shabestan is located on the first floor, approximately fourteen metres by seventeen, with ceiling and floor constructed of timber. The mosque is semi-detached on the north side and detached on all other sides, by being projected into the Rashteh. It has two stairs, the southern one still being used whilst the eastern one is damaged and disused.

The basement room is about 2.2m high and is accessed through a door on the east side. It is not currently in use due to lack of light and has been used as festival storage space in recent years. On the other hand, the main Shabestan on the first floor is in use. Approximately 3.3 metres in height and in line with its balcony, the Shabestan is clearly built according to normal local architectural materials and detailing, but built substantially to last. Again on the ceilings are found inscriptions now fading badly and no longer legible.. The date of this building is inscribed on the basement door as being 701HG. (1322AD) The door is of the Ilkhanate period or twelfth century AD.

The building however is much older due to other references found. There are two more doors in this mosque which are respectively dated 1054 (1675 AD) during the reign of King Abbas of the Safavid period, while the second door to the west dates from 1044 HG (1667AD). Due to the sharp fall of the land from North to South, it now has direct access to the second floor from the outside.

It is clear from the basement to the mosque that the majority of these mosques in Abianeh's old quarter were appointed with "Mehrab" basements which are much older than the mosques themselves. The construction and the materials used, together with the shape and size of the spaces, indicate thus. All point to a civilisation



before Islam having an influence on them as a whole. It is possible that perhaps these places were originally other buildings or religious buildings adapted to a new use. However none of their archetypal syntax matches the pattern of mosques found elsewhere in the region, nor do they have the correct iconographic forms such as the minarets, other than the Jameh mosque. It may well be that the local culture was much more dominant than the new religious beliefs and social indoctrination, which were readapted to suit the inhabitants rather than absorbing them into the canon of religion. Certainly, these mosques do not dominate and are not full of decorative tiles and the calligraphic religious verses from the holy Koran. In fact they are simple icons of stripped down basic buildings with more of a spiritual sense of place. It is as though one is taken there to experience meditation, and know one's inner self rather than experience the magisterial sway of an omnipotent God reigning supreme and unchallenged, expressed through the dominance of a magnificently endowed building where the individual is reduced to a level of insignificance. On the contrary the mosques reflect domesticity and simple, key everyday architectural forms and gestures.

### 5.24 The Yosman Mosque

This mosque is located to the south of the settlement and is now constructed mainly of brick and mortar. It is one of the oldest mosques in Abianeh but, due to extensive damage and repairs, the mosque has no intrinsic value other than its function. It was typical of the Biroongara style with no internal courtyards. The building is faced with traditional finishes to help it blend in with the existing. In terms of the

typology, it follows the same principles as the other small mosques in the region.

5.25      Ziaratgah of Hinza

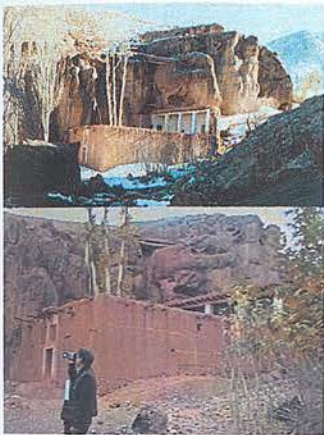


Figure 305



Figure 306



Figure 307



Figure 308

Strange and controversial, the Ziaratgah of Hinza is located to the south-east of the settlement, across the dry river, over the nearby hills and across to a neighbouring valley formed by the opposite mountains to the south. The site is far from the eyes of any visitor to Abianeh.

It is as if the building has been embraced by the mountains, in a gesture of protection for a valuable monument to the past.



Figure 309



Figure 310



Figure 311



Figure 312

Figures 309-312: The Temple of Hinza

One of the local fables refers to a site deep within the mountain, where the southern layer of the mountain meets the south-eastern outcrop. It is a place where a



natural spring flows and is named "Bi Bi Zobeideh khatoon"<sup>40</sup> a daughter of the imam Mosa Kazem(P) who took refuge with the people of Abianeh and died there. However after a careful study of this phenomenon, the research indicates that, in fact, scattered around Iran there are many places where these 'temples' existed, all with different names and different religious connotations. However similar tales persist elsewhere in Iran. After visits to the Bi.Bi Shahbanoo mountain near the city of Teheran and high up in the mountains beside the city of Yazd at the Zoroastrian place of worship known as Chak Chak, the researcher found a common element in these places which doubtlessly links them.

Of the three, and the probability is that there are more across the country and perhaps en route to Greece, the shrine of Chack Chack is the supreme example. The associated tale is similar in that: a princess of Zoroastrian origin, fearful of her life, seeks refuge in the mountains around the city of Yazd and hides where two mountains meet and where a natural spring flows. The mountain claims her in her desperate plight and she is never seen again. In Abianeh too, Bi Bi Zobeideh Khatoon runs there for safety and requests refuge from the mountain and it is given in exactly the same way as at Chack Chak. In Abianeh, but especially in the case of "Chack Chak", the temple of the Zoroastrians has as high an importance as Mecca or Madina has for Muslims or Jerusalem for the Christians and Jews.

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<sup>40</sup> There are many shrines in Iran commencing with the name of BiBi: "Something" or a reference to Anahita can be found in a book called the Khatoon Haft. (See Mohammad Ebrahim, Geological "Palize" Khatoon Haft Ghaleh) 1976., pp.150-368).



## Chapter Five

Is it merely a coincidence that Abianeh had fire temples of Zoroastrian origin, or that its inhabitants are so different, in many ways advanced and so culturally distinct in their life-style? The countrywide movements at large did not overwhelm their way of life, while their location or relative isolation helped greatly in preserving their culture. The phenomenon of these places is that only women apparently use all the temples, as if it were about females protected by God, or lives that are given to God, which is celebrated. Although in Chack Ckack the shrine has become the central feature of their holy place, is used yearly and its fire is kept alight all year by a "Khadem"<sup>41</sup> who lives there permanently. In Abianeh it has become the place where women find peace and solitude, seek forgiveness or ask for favours of the holy Bi Bi Zobeideh Khatom. The common features are apparent. The majority of these temples are high up in the mountains. The second is the name of the temple, which is invariably that of a woman. Thirdly it has always been a sanctuary of some famous figure or holy female person, typically a lady in distress, who finds peace and sanctuary there. Fourthly there is always an opening in the mountain, which is personified as a doorway to a world beyond. Finally the element of water is always in the vicinity, depicting life itself and the spirit that flows through it.

It therefore makes reference to the three elements of earth, water and fire, three elements which appear on the tombstones of the old Abianeh cemetery. It is also interesting to note that the inhabitants treat the place as a shrine of a saint, who can bestow favours, should they reveal their secrets to this place where also they may find comfort and solutions to their lives, as if under the sway of a pagan god. The female

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<sup>41</sup> Khadem: The person responsible, a curator.

## Chapter Five

God of the Zoroastrians who had this capability and gift of being able to save and protect women was "Anahita" equivalent to "Dionysus", the god of life, emotions, love, movement, music and changing temperaments - as opposed to "Apollo" (Zoroastrian equivalent "Ahooramazda") the God of plastic arts, the solids, the stuff of life, stability and firmness. Where would Ahooramazda or Apollo be if Anahita or Dionysus did not give bestowing emotions and life?

Nahid or Anahita, was reputedly an angel who gave life motion, brought life into the world and gave Apollo life, motion and music, pollinated the flowers and allowed the trees to bear fruit.



Figure 313

**Figure 313: The women of Abianeh placing effigies inside the temple in order to bear children or hear their confessions.**

The building is spiritual but radically different in typology to that of the mosque. In fact it indicates the worshipping of other than normal 'acceptable' gods by referring more to the supernatural and magic, mythical and allegorical beliefs, The building is traditionally constructed using similar methods as before and has been restored, upgraded, extended and maintained by the inhabitants from ancient times to the present. This demonstrates the importance of a multicultural dimension to the inhabitants and a complexity of their inner lives, something so sacred, so refined and

so much full of fascination, intrigue and difference. A phenomenon, it articulates the complexity and the sacred inner-self of the Abianeh culture, which needs protection.

What remains is a complex building comprising mainly public spaces designed around an inner courtyard open to air. It is a building in the style of Daroongara, inwardly looking, with hardly any external windows at all. It is a place of meditation and offerings. Access is made through the front door and one to the top at roof level to the rear. Here the building completely abuts the mountain and is made to protect the shrine at the meeting place of the two layers of the mountains, a small room tucked up against the lower intersection of the two mountain layers.

The building is rational and rectangular in shape while built in the traditional way. The restorations and upgrading have introduced plaster and hard flooring to the place - as new elements added to the construction techniques.

However, deep within a small corner of the courtyard, an entrance has been made to a very dark and raw room. By bringing together the man-made surfaces against the mountain body within and against the far corner where the two mountains meet, a shrine with a protective front and two doors has been installed. It is large enough to place candle or gift within. This is the inner sanctum of the earth, lighted only by a glimmer or two of daylight from above. The strength and the tension that develop within are primeval and powerful.





Figure 314



Figure 315



Figure 316

### Figures 314-316: Photographs of the inner sanctum of the Temple

No more than two by one metre wide yet full height to the top of the mountain as if a chimney shaft, the man made “Hejleh” or shrine, has a protective front wall with decorative trellises of timber, typical of shrines in Iran. Visitors are invited to place offerings to the bosom of the God Anahita in order to solve their problems and to ensure life for their sick, to safeguard children against harm, to make fertile their husbands or themselves and to avert them all from evil. Wrapped in cloth and personal belongings, depending on the nature of the problem, the icons or offerings were placed within this bosom of the “Hejleh”. The inner sanctum was complemented by lighting a fire in the old lamps while the natural spring flowed forth. In recent years the spring has been diverted to flow around the dwelling. The women felt closer to god and the magic of the mother earth, the sun and the water. Artefacts were found retained in the corners of the Hejleh, deeply placed and hidden from the naked eye. No-one had apparently ever seen or (fortunately) tampered with these offerings before. The researcher used modern day techniques to achieve pictures for the first time. These items remain there still, as testament to an ancient classical life in Abianeh - one that was so deeply rooted in the passage of time and a history of evolution, and so engraved in the hearts of its people that made them unique and was

valuable enough to cherish and retain. This belief kept them apart from the mainstream changes that took hold of Iran during different periods throughout its history. However the reader will be aware that, by exposing such elements to the public domain of scholarship, these artefacts are now rendered vulnerable. The responsibility rests on the National Heritage agency to protect these treasures. None of the places or items within Abianeh is ever protected against theft, which is in itself, also a reflection of the quality of the inhabitants and the trust they have in something bigger and more important than themselves or their positions. Consequently the authorities are urged to make some kind of recommendation in order to protect these items of historical importance.

### 5.26 The Emamzadeh Yahiya and Issa (the shrine of Jacob and Jesus)

The Emamzadeh is a place of worship. Not a mosque, it is shrine. Traditionally in Iran the Emamzadeh may be constituted a mosque. In some parts of Iran there are still shrines with attached mosques. The status of Emamzadeh is due to its inauguration and relationship to the burial of a saint or prophet-like figure of Islam, or one of his descendants.

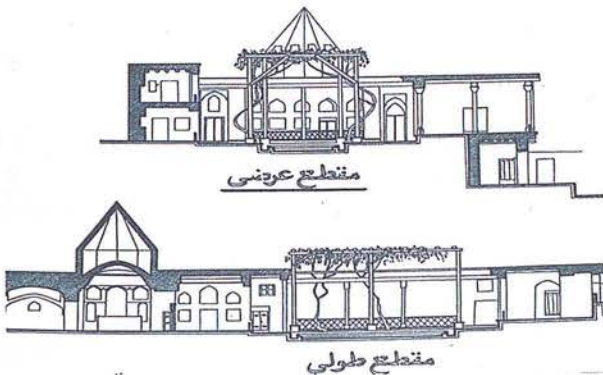
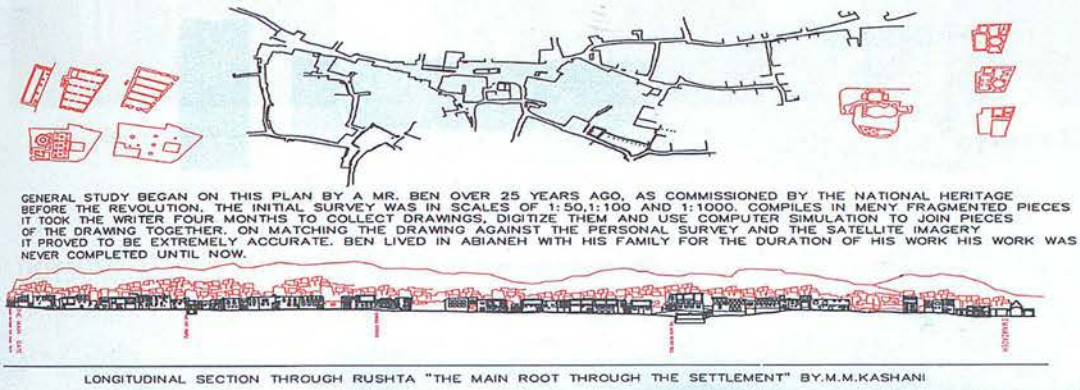


Figure 317: The Emamzadeh Yahya and Issa



The main route through Abianeh leads the visitor directly through the settlement from the west to the east, to the doorsteps of the Shrine, passing the Miandeh and on to the Jameh mosque and to the Hosseinieh where the Nakhl is kept.



**Figure 318: Longitudinal section through the Rashteh from the main gate to the Emamzadeh**

This Shrine is known to be the burial ground of two of the sons of the Imam (Emam) Moosa Kazem (P). The construction and the form of the building are to some extent similar to the rest of the buildings of importance in the settlement, with one notable difference: it is the only building with different skyline from the rest. The roof of the main burial chamber of the two sons of the Imam is vertically announced by an Eight sided Needle Spire, decorated with turquoise tiles and has the inscription of "Ya Ali", the name of the first holy Imam of Islam, all around on it. This spire is common to Natanz, Ardestan and Kashan provinces, and dates to about 1306 (1927). One, Hussein Ba Ba Kashani, endowed this addition to the Emamzadeh. It is extremely unusual in Abianeh to celebrate a shrine or such a place with a dome or a spire dome. The spire must have been an addition to this building and it is probable that, during the Qajar period, this architectural icon was added to the building by the rulers of the



day, together with various decorative features such as the eclectic columns and plasterwork on walls.

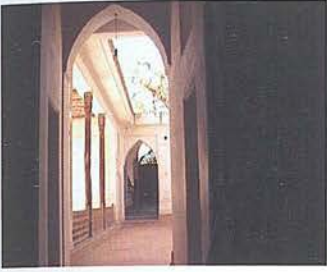


Figure 319



Figure 320

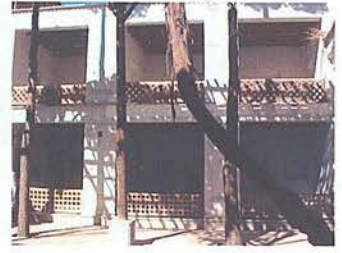


Figure 321

### Figures 319-321: Columns and finishes of the Emamzadeh

The building is built around a central courtyard such as the “Hinza Shrine”. It is in the style of Daroongara, inward looking with no windows, but with one side open as Biroongara or external looking, typical to the Abianeh style. The walls were thick and the building was realised in two storeys on three sides. The fourth side was made open to the south as a plateau with a panoramic view of the landscape beyond.<sup>42</sup>

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<sup>42</sup> Note that this kind of space in the Qajar period was very common and was known as” Dorooyeh or Setavand”. A space with two sides open.



Figure 322



Figure 323



Figure 324

Figures 322-324 : The open and end of the Emamzadeh depicting a palace fronting a main square , recalling the Aliqapoo and Chehelsotoon palaces of Isfahan

The styles of the Qajar and Safavid periods are well reflected in the reveals and the plasterwork and timberwork. It was not a tradition in Islam to place Icons on the walls and import superstitions inside to the Ziaratgah or the mosques or any place of Islamic worship. However in Abianeh the use of Doves and decorative plaster can be observed. Walls are decorated with “Esfand necklaces” to help keep evil away and not allow people to cast an evil eye on the place and challenge its purpose. The inner courtyard is about twelve by fourteen metres. As Abianeh has no dead ends or cul-de-sacs, public buildings were viewed in the same way and so the courtyard was also used as a walkway or passage to the lower part of the settlement through the Ziaratgah, as it still is today. The natural spring, which gushes through the “Rashteh”, appears here and feeds the central pool before circulating around it and leaving again through a bypass in the lower grounds, along by the rear passage and finally through to the rear of the Ziaratgah to the east.

Located at the east wing is the actual burial chamber. Small and contained, it has within it a cover to a tomb made of wood which has been geometrically designed but has no particular inscriptions. The scholars of the settlement date it to the Teymourid period (14<sup>th</sup> centuryAD).



It is said that under the wooden cover a decorative tiled cover exists which may reveal more clues as to its exact date. Consequently it should be pointed out that any invasive procedure should be undertaken by Iranian archaeologists.

It is also relevant to note that inside none of the buildings of Abianeh were tiles used. This absence of a significant material from the canon of construction is most strange as tiles during the history of Iran's architectural evolution has always played a prominent role as art, if not for practical reasons. This absent feature reinforces the notion that in Abianeh they believed in their own techniques and held sacred the contact and integration of life with earth. It further points out that the population live a life void of excessive glamour, comparatively speaking. Their lives are more inclined toward the inner self as is the Sufi kind of belief that the reflected richness of life could be found within. Thus they found God and were one with Him and praised all that were around them and all that supported life itself as heavenly objects.

### 5.27

### The Fort of "Pal" or "Palehamaneh"



Figure 325

This fort is located to the south of the village and protected the north-west of the settlement and the approach roads and hills beyond. It was also overlooked by the



entire settlement panoramically from South.



Figure 326



Figure 327



Figure 328

### Figures 326-328: The fort of Palehamaneh

The majority of forts were made of dry-jointed stonework throughout this region, at least to a reasonable height above the ground level to provide protection. The need for these forts came about at the beginning of the Islamic wars. However the use of the forts and “Caravanserai”<sup>43</sup> is not new to Iran. About 500 BC the ancient form of the ‘pony express’ was invented by the Iranians, which relied on the system of Caravanserai along the routes providing fresh horses and riders.

In Abianeh there are three forts and this particular fort was not dedicated to protection alone, but also was used to house the settlement’s goods and life-stock, along with various guests, merchants and visitors. It was at one time widely used and located on accessible flat hills to the south, with an area of about 2,500 square metres. As part of a defence system intended to protect the inhabitants and provide adequate cover with relative ease of access, two further forts were constructed: the fort of “Yosman” and the fort of “Herdeh”.

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<sup>43</sup> Caravanserai: A resting place for traders and travellers.

The Palehamaneh fort, was free-standing and completely detached. The walls were triangulated with a maximum width of 1.5m and up to 1m thick above ground level by using stonework as a girth to protect it against the weather. The four corners each had a watchtower. The fort is of the Zand period and there is an absence of any buildings inside. This and the fact that it could be seen from all corners of the settlement, strengthens the case for its use. There is little doubt it was primarily intended for the purposes of visitors who chose to rest their camels and horses, and partake in the produce of the settlement. It would also be reasonable to suggest that tents would have been erected within the compound. Their animals and livestock would also have been safe from wolves and other predators outside the fort. About one hundred families within the settlement jointly owned the fort, the size of which also suggests that trade was very active and such a large space was needed. It is important to note that other village forts were also inhabited and some were multi-storey settlements. In Abianeh the functions of every building and their uses were different and the integrity of life and its elements never got mixed together, thus adding to the purity and unaffected primitiveness of the settlement in terms of its initial realisation.

### 5.28 The Fort of "Yosman"

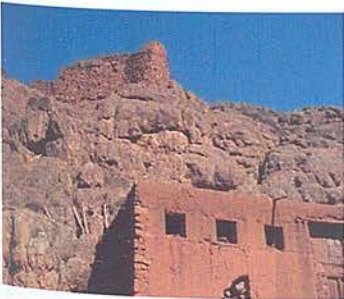


Figure 329



Figure 330



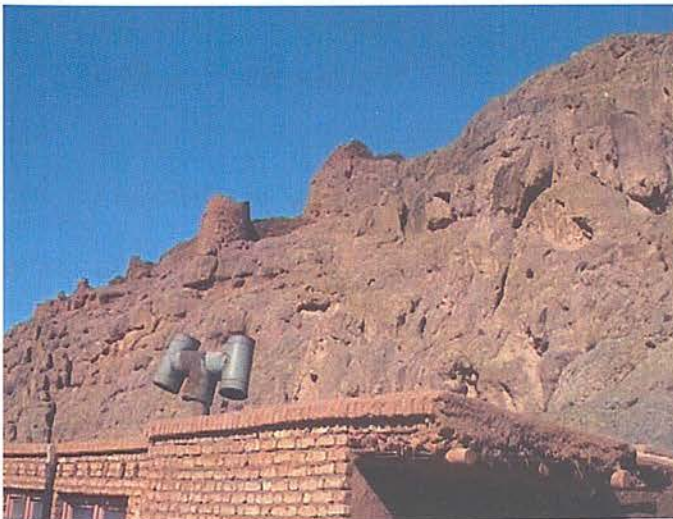
Figure 331

This fort was located to the north of the village and incorporated the vistas from the



north-west to the south and east of the settlement. It overlooked the settlement from the top and the valley below within easy reach of the dwellers of the Miandeh to the west section of the settlement.

This fort was made of stone and established a good hold on the mountaintop while securing itself against all sides by sitting prominently on the solid mountain. The purpose of this fort was purely to provide protection against any sudden invasion as a place of refuge. This fort is now mostly in a ruinous condition, due to lack of use and the effects of extreme weather, an absence of maintenance and periodic removal of its materials for building purposes elsewhere. These forts were originally pre-Islamic and lost their usefulness over time and were never later used by the inhabitants, who were, all in all, extremely peaceful people.



**Figure 332 : The fort of Yosman**



### 5.29 The Fort of “Herdeh”

This fort as that of “Yosman” was used as a place of safety during any attack on the settlement, It covered the area from the Miandeh to the east and was in easy reach of the east of the settlement. This fort was also constructed of stone and was smaller in size than the previous.



Figure 333 : The fort of Herdah

### 5.30 The Main “Ab’anbar”

Ab-Anbar virtually translates as water storage. In a country as extensive and vast as Iran, the only way to provide a reliable water supply was through storage and efficient distribution. Inconsistent ground water levels were so varied and surface water collection so intermittent, so the Ab-Anbar proved the reliable alternative,



Water was directed from natural springs and stored in horizontal natural stone tanks with an access point safe for its collection. Water was accessed through a spring at the bottom of a deep stair usually with no landing in its flight. This leads straight to a level where water flows at a very controlled pace. Indeed both the system and the building are referred to as the "Ab'anbar".

There are essentially two kinds of water storage or access to water in Abianeh. One was the Ab'anbar system and every region has one. This type was the most reliable all year round while the other, the fresh spring system, was more desirable and more natural. Springing out of the mountain, the surface water could be accessed with ease. The water from the natural springs around Abianeh is amongst the healthiest quality in the country.

The system of Ab'anbar has been superseded in Abianeh by piped water brought straight through from the springs at high level. These structures are gradually but surely falling into disrepair and their access points are usually blocked by vegetation in the form of twigs and branches of trees, intended to avoid any accidents.

Due to their robust structure, these Ab'anbarha tend to last for a long time. The Abianeh Ab'anbar dates from early Islam. Before that water was obtained from the springs and the riverside, before it later dried up at the lower level. The structure of the water wells consisted of three parts: "Tanooreh" or "Khazieh" which basically stored the fast running water in a static location, to be easily and safely collected below ground level. The second element was the front access and stairs down to it called "Pishir". The third element was the "Badgir" or "Kishkhan" which was to create ventilation to the stored water and to create a cooling effect. It was achieved by allowing cross-ventilation on to the storage area from two sides. This was essential as



static or warm water grew green vegetation or "Khazeh" and would become undrinkable.

In areas where water was possibly contaminated, the water would be passed through different sands and pebble pools to filter the water before it reached the wells. There also was a system of draining the wells in case the heat created vegetation or algae growing on the water. To prevent this happening salt and lime powder would be added to the wells.<sup>44</sup>

### **Summary of the Special features of Abianeh to be noted for the revitalisation programme.**

- 1) There were no dead ends in any routes through the settlement.
- 2) Buildings were erected with propriety and suitability of owner-occupier in relation to social status.
- 3) Most institutional buildings were located along the main routes, especially the "Rashteh"
- 4) In Abianeh the first elements of the settlement and its civilisation can be observed in terms of the integration of buildings and daily rituals: graveyard, water wells, Ziaratgah, mosques, schools, public spaces, trading areas, etc.
- 5) There is a direct relationship between the centre and the periphery of the settlement.
- 6) The integration of houses with their natural surroundings is very specific and overwhelmingly dominant and uniform.

---

<sup>44</sup> Engineer M Pirnia Roads and Wells National Heritage of Iran, Tehran., 1370, .p.126



## Chapter Five

- 7) The structural zoning and separation of natural and man-made built elements is matched by their distinct segregation and integrity of the boundaries.
- 8) The integration of animals in the inhabitants' daily lives and the relation between them is handled most scientifically and elegantly.
- 9) The use of natural materials signals a preference for urban continuity of the past.
- 10) The evolution of the dwellings and their hierarchy are very clear and instrumental in the people's lives in its detail function-form relationship.
- 11) The complex nature of the inhabitants' beliefs and the unique mixture of tradition and modernity and retained identity exist in spite of overwhelming changes in the country through different times.
- 12) The multi-layer of religious and metaphysical beliefs, are echoed in the freedom of the soul and everyday life, along with the synergy between their deep cultural beliefs and modern day beliefs.

These observations are 'sacred' and should be considered as cornerstones in the successful approach to the preservation of an exceptional way of life.

## Chapter Six:

# **The Design of the Revitalization Program**

## Chapter Six: The Design of the Revitalization Programme

### Introduction

The revitalisation arguments and objective statistical analyses and conclusions resulting in the final recommendations.

### The Design of the Revitalization Programme

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## Revitalisation Plan and Concluding Investigations

### 6.1. Brief Overview

The settlement has been observed and studied with the knowledge provided by the settlement itself and its people as it is and how it was, together with why they lived the way they did. To proceed further and suggest ways in which it can be examined didactically and then to accommodate the areas of difficulties, the settlement's microcosm requires attention. Analysing the problem areas which have given rise to the demise of the various factions have been noted and observed.

Abianeh has become recognised as a historically valuable entity within Iran, by various governmental institutions by individuals, both Iranian and from overseas. People have become aware of the place and its value, culturally and historically as a component of a national heritage. However, no-one to date has undertaken anything substantial to address its demise or preservation. Other than occasional pieces of work which do not tackle the real issues and in the long run do not offer any true solutions. The researcher attempts in this chapter to summarise and finalise the work by addressing these true issues, while outlining plausible solutions based on the total information attained and conclusions drawn, thereby taking into account all factions of the private and the public sector. In this way a series of recommendations is proposed to suit everyone's interest and to help revitalise the settlement, taking into account the indigenous people and their opinion and reality of life.

Two areas of decay have been most noticeable and well examined. One has been to retain the indigenous people of the settlement, in order to retain their livelihoods and

to encourage others to return to the settlement. The other is the control of irregular growth by the influx of outsiders seeking recreation in a pleasant environment.

How could life be brought back into the settlement without destroying the existing fabric of the settlement in all its complexity?

To find the solution, the researcher had to look within the minds and hearts of the people and gauge their impressions subjectively and objectively. By mapping the 'inner patterns', this would then help unravel the mystery of what had taken place. The approach therefore had to acknowledge a certain series of analyses, which were made on site:

1. An analysis of the guidelines and policies of the expansion and life of the settlement.
2. The analysis of the unity and synergy of the cross fertilisation of the reaction of the people, to the built environment and its future changes.
3. Identifying, ascertaining and proposing new functions suitable for stability and the revitalisation programme.

To achieve the above goals a research path was laid down in order to open up the hidden information.

### **6.1.1. Research into the Existing Conditions**

As noted above, the growth and influence of the settlement from different points of view and eras in its past history will help in understanding the results of the



research outlined in this chapter. This is the outcome of the most fundamental basis of the inherent genius of the settlement in terms of public grouping, when referring to social, commercial, economic and tourism factors and many more dimensions that can give rise to the revitalisation programme.

### **6.1.2 Analysis, Resolution and Conclusions**

This section looks at the problems inherent in the built environment and the capabilities, which have been established in previous chapters.

### **6.1.3 Capitalisation of all aspects of positive ways forward and the policies of the revitalisation programme.**

In this section different ways of revitalisation programme are considered. This forms one of the most important sections dealing with the revitalisation and the future of Abianeh, which lends itself to suggestions as to the way Abianeh could be established and shaped.

The majority of the reports and programming of the revitalisation proposal have been assembled together in this sense.

The information gathered for the research has been primarily gathered from two sources: firstly, from historical, social and political publications and complementary studies in the region; secondly from a detailed analysis of the settlement, its occupants and their survey responses. In this way a statistical analysis about the people, with implications for central government, regional government, landlords and tenants,

investors, tourists, and the built fabric, can be provided.

For each and every building a specific questionnaire was devised and therefore covered the entire settlement in all its aspects, whether occupied, unoccupied, in ruin, in need of repairs, etc. This builds up detailed data on the place and its occupants. With the aid of these questionnaires and statistical analyses, a new set of information was realised - a new set of information which was not expected and became vital to the researcher's programme while complementary to proposed solutions.

**1- location of the building:**

Name of district..... Name of road:..... Registration No of  
land..... Number of the building.....

**2- Kind of usage:**

Residential ☐ commercial ☐ Offices ☐ Other .....

**3-Type of construction:**

Bricks and steel ☐ Bricks and timber ☐ Stone and timber ☐  
Other .....

**4- Number of stories high:**

Single Story ☐ Double Story ☐ Three story ☐ Other or More.....

**5- Composition of the house:**

Kitchen ☐ Baking Oven ☐ Bath room ☐ Store ☐ W.C ☐ Stables ☐

Balcony ☐ Other.....



12- Number of the residents who are living temporarily.....

13- Occupation of the house holds leader..... Primary job.....

Secondary Job.....

14- Number of people working in the family.....

15- Level of income of the family .....

16- Location of purchase of everyday consumables:

Foodstuff..... Clothing..... House hold goods.....

Health Sanitary and chemical:.....

Educational.....Leisure.....

17- Age group, Gender, level of education of each family:

25- What is your opinion on the future of Abianeh:

Good ☐ Bad ☐ No hope ☐ there is hope ☐ other.....

26- What are the difficulties in living in Abianeh :

.....  
.....  
.....

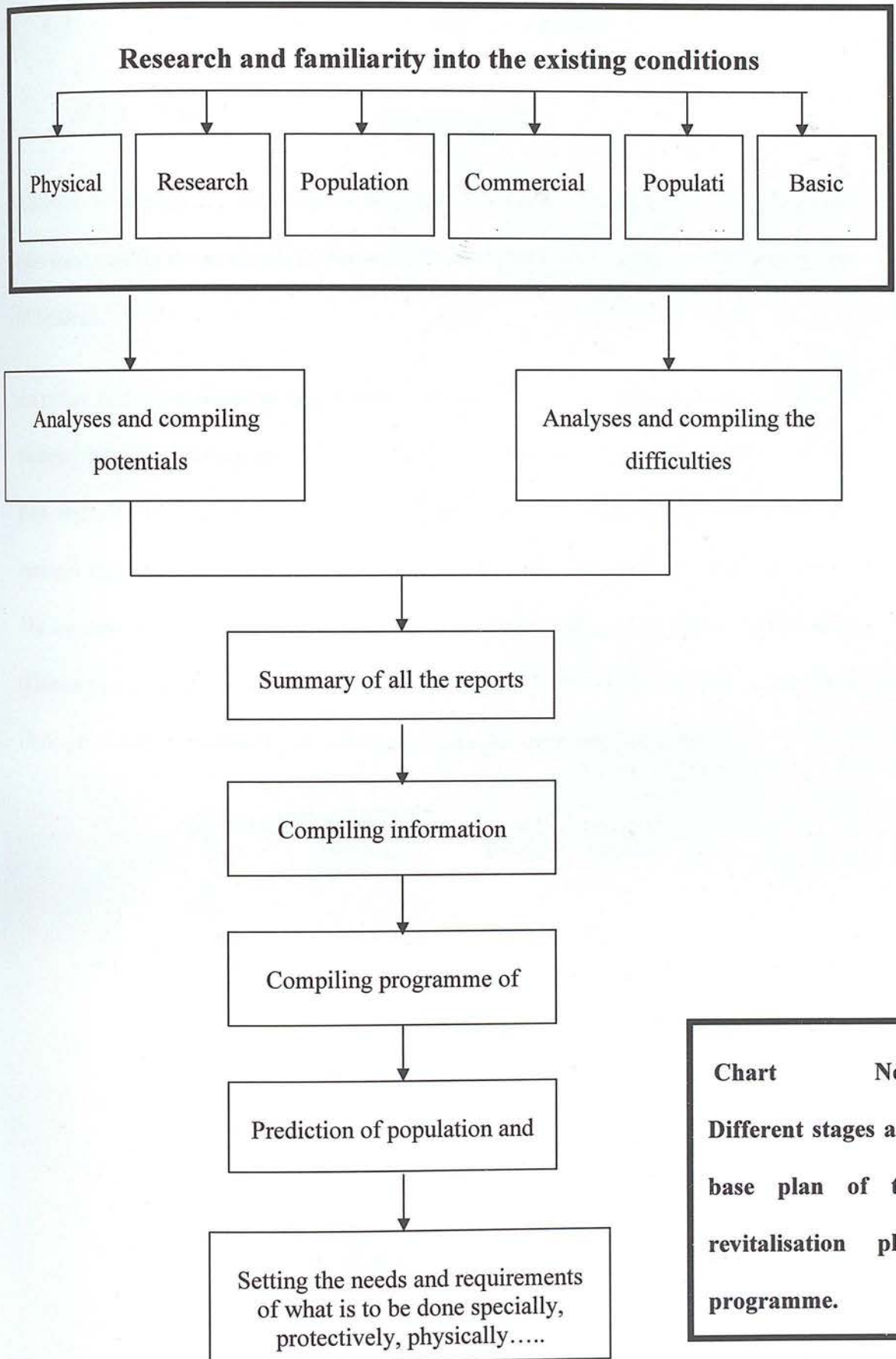
27- What is your opinion about the new and restored buildings and the material used?

.....  
.....

a) Do you like the building restored traditionally      Yes ☐ No ☐

b) Do you like to see new designs with new planes      Yes ☐ No ☐

1.1 The list of general Questionnaire used to survey 100% of the buildings within the settlement.



**Chart      No.1**  
**Different stages and**  
**base plan of the**  
**revitalisation plan**  
**programme.**



## 6.2. Research into the Existing Conditions

### 6.2.1. The Basic Public Information:-

Abianeh in its heyday was one of the most populated settlements in the Barzrood province, within the outreach of Natanz town, and under the control of the capital city of Isfahan.

As noted under the regional map below, Abianeh is located 70km to Isfahan, 40km to Natanz, 20km to Kashan and 25km to the main fort on the Karkas Mountains. 36°-51' East and 35°-33' North. It has an altitude of 2220m above sea level with a relative summer temperature of 32°C. and a lowest temperature recorded in winter of -15°C. The average rainfall is 10cm per year, most of which falls in the month of Bahman (February) , Esfand (March ) and Farvardeen (April ). During the month of Khordad (June ) to Aban (November ) no substantial rain has ever been recorded.



Figure 334

Due to this isolation and great distances from substantial cities, Abianeh has never had notable influence on the region as a whole. The only known service which was given from Abianeh was medical based. There is no evidence of Abianeh having any historical, social influence in the region. It has always been in a relatively isolated, secular, self reliant and motivated state of being. It has demonstrated something which was not seen before and that is the idea of self-preservation and a cultural, historical awareness which was unique in the area. For a researcher this alone makes Abianeh stand out from the rest of the settlements in the region.

In the 17th and 18th centuries, during the time of the Safavid period, followed by the 18th century Zand, the 18th to 19th century Qajar, and thereafter the 20<sup>th</sup> century Pahlavi, Abianeh has been considered a special place. Furthermore during none of these dynasties was the culture or the way of life in Abianeh substantially 'tampered with'. There is little doubt that this was due to its harmony and balance and a prevailing peace which still endure in the settlement today.

Something which has been missed in Abianeh is the relationship of the roof tops to one another. The roof tops have a function of being the equivalent of a courtyard of the house which is archetypal and used as an outdoor activity. In other words, as a member of the community, at one time the roof of your neighbour was yours to use and vice-versa. In fact the settlement had three levels of operation: that of the outside, inside and the roof tops. This is most relevant when considering the preservation of the typology when analysing the village.

### **6.2.2. The Population and Anthropological Research**

This study of Abianeh had to recognise a dual aspect:- The residents who were permanent and the temporary residents or the transient residents. The resident population relies on sustainability of the village and lives within its capacity. The transient residents rely on the seasonal capacity and sustainability of the settlement and their own external requirements or pressures, which they bring with them when visiting. The research therefore takes account of this fact and differentiates between the two.

## **6.3. The Specificity of the Permanently Resident Population**

### **6.3.1. The Number of People and its Variations**

Abianeh, in accordance with the health records of 1375 to 1345, demonstrates that the main demise in population has been associated with the rate of people who left the settlement and the lack of newborn within the settlement. Chart No.1 demonstrates the variation in number of people and the speed of population growth from the Persian years 1335 to 1375. In 40 years the population dropped to one fifth and every consecutive year by 3.77%. The main departure as of 1345 is still continuing. However until 1345 the village was stable, in fact showing a positive development. The research demonstrates that it was from then that the population decrease commenced.



| Year                       | 1335 | 1345  | 1355  | 1365 | 1370  | 1375 |
|----------------------------|------|-------|-------|------|-------|------|
| Population<br>count        | 1603 | 2181  | 881   | 498  | 515   | 345  |
| The rate<br>of growth<br>% | 3.13 | -8.66 | -5.54 | 0.67 | -7.70 | -    |

**Chart No.1: Variation in population changes during the years 1335 to 1375.**

The reason for this demise has mostly been due to commercial factors associated with the possibilities of work and the lack of sustainable trade.

There seems to have been an accumulation of several issues giving rise to the population demise. The importance of foreign goods and the imposition of central government controls on importation of agricultural goods from outside the country, at cheaper prices, reduced the viability of local produce in the region. Social pressures on the younger adults and their families to move with the faster moving world outside, and the lack of fast growing communications outside the settlement along with the restrictions and limitations on the viability of the local sustainable produce each played a part.

With the advent of modern technology in general and better agricultural technology and better agricultural techniques in particular, a new added pressure was also exerted on the limited plots of land and the number of workers working the land.

For every job lost there never was an alternative job to take its place. This is another reason why the settlement's resources are not adequate to sustain continuity in relating to the working force.

It seems ironic, but due to the progressive nature of the people and their general awareness of the country at large, unlike other villages, they were able to integrate better and faster with the outside world - in some cases so much so that they managed to hold key positions, socially and politically in the country, until today.

Up until now it has been the individual family's responsibility to maintain the fabric of the settlement and the neighbourhood. This system has also deteriorated due to a lack of overall policy as to the upkeep of the settlement. In some cases, due to the absence of immediate neighbours, those residents who are trying to do something about their own house restoration are effectively stopped due to party wall or constructional problems.

### **6.3.2. Migrating / Leaving the Settlement**

With a simple calculation one can ascertain that based on the year 1335 with the prevailing rate of increase in population, the total should have reached 5230 by the year 1375. However, in the last 40 years nearly 4,885 people have migrated to other regions of the country or abroad.

With regard to the destinations of people who have left Abianeh, the studies

carried out demonstrate that 86% went to the capital Tehran, 10% to Kashan and 4% left for destinations outside the country or other regions in Iran. However the majority of them kept at least a tenuous contact with Abianeh in terms of their property or relatives, and have returned on regular basis, especially at the festive seasons and special occasions. Chart No. 2 demonstrates the decrease in population and second generation interest in remaining in Abianeh during the years 1345 to 1375, (1966-1996).

| Year                               | 1345 | 1355 | 1365 | 1370 | 1375 |
|------------------------------------|------|------|------|------|------|
| Number of families/<br>Unit family | 485  | 336  | 227  | 230  | 176  |
| Next generation on<br>increase / % | 4.49 | 2.62 | 2.19 | 2,24 | 1.69 |

Chart No.2: The changes in population and 2nd generation in Abianeh During the years 1345-1375.

### 6.3.3. The Number of Families, the 2nd Generation and Their Families

Consequently the number of families within Abianeh drastically dropped. So much so, that in the year 1375 (1996) only 176 families remained as permanent residents. The number of new families, due to young adults migrating from Abianeh, was also



Reduced, thereafter to a mere 1.96 people - or less than two people (see chart No.2.)

This rapid demise in the youth leaving the settlement therefore gave rise to the single member and couple families increasing in proportion, to 45.2% and 34.8% respectively of the total population.

| Total | Nine person |     | Eight person |    | Seven person |    | Six person |    | Five person |    | Four person |    | Three person |    | Two person |    | Single family |    | S.G /<br>R.L         |
|-------|-------------|-----|--------------|----|--------------|----|------------|----|-------------|----|-------------|----|--------------|----|------------|----|---------------|----|----------------------|
|       |             |     |              |    |              |    |            |    |             |    |             |    |              |    |            |    |               |    |                      |
|       | %           | no  | %            | no | %            | no | %          | no | %           | no | %           | no | %            | no | %          | no | %             | no |                      |
| 16.6  | 19          | 0.9 | 1            | -  | 1.7          | 2  | 0.9        | 1  | 3.5         | 4  | 0.9         | 1  | 2.6          | 3  | 2.6        | 3  | 3.5           | 4  | Panj Ali             |
| 13    | 15          | -   | -            | -  | -            | -  | -          | -  | -           | -  | 0.9         | 1  | 1.7          | 2  | 6.1        | 7  | 4.3           | 5  | Ziaratgah            |
| 27.8  | 32          | -   | -            | -  | -            | -  | -          | -  | 1.7         | 2  | -           | -  | 0.9          | 1  | 10.4       | 12 | 14.8          | 17 | Pal(Baladeh)         |
| 25.2  | 29          | -   | -            | -  | -            | -  | -          | -  | -           | -  | 0.9         | 1  | 0.9          | 1  | 10.4       | 12 | 13            | 15 | Yosman<br>(Mian deh) |
| 17.4  | 20          | -   | -            | -  | -            | -  | -          | -  | 1.7         | 2  | -           | -  | 0.9          | 1  | 5.2        | 6  | 9.6           | 11 | Paen Deh             |
| 100   | 115         | 0.9 | 1            | -  | 1.7          | 2  | 0.9        | 1  | 7.1         | 8  | 2.7         | 3  | 7.1          | 8  | 34.8       | 40 | 45.2          | 52 | Total                |

Chart No. 3: The composition of the permanent residents of Abianeh in terms of their second generation within the location of their settlement.  
SG=Second Generation. RL = Residence Location.

The composition of the permanent residents of Abianeh in terms of their second The proportion of this demise in accordance with each district in Abianeh can be observed, as in chart No.3. The research demonstrates a 20.6 average in each region of people of the next generation which proved to be different from that of the health centres statistical information on Abianeh. The important point about the result of the survey reflected by chart No.4 is that the one or two people families are mainly elderly or are those who are so old that they cannot be moved. In fact the settlement shows no future evidence or any intention in starting up new families.

### **6.3.4. The Composition of the Age and Gender Groups**

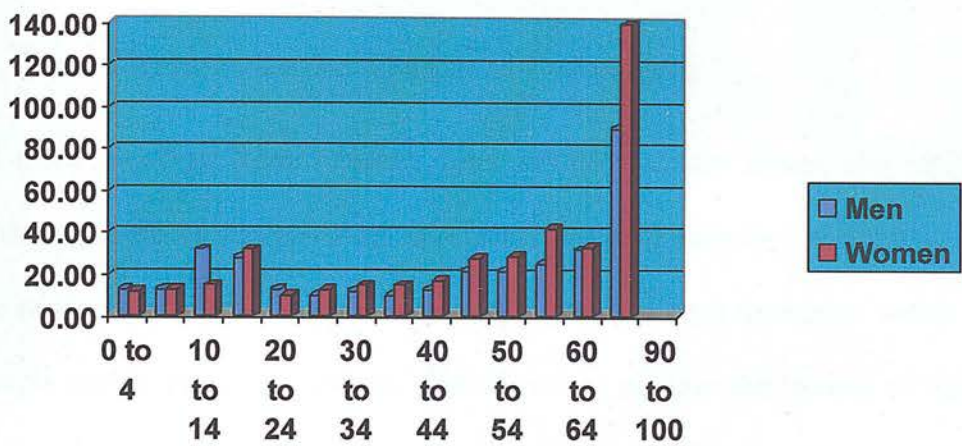
The population make-up in terms of age and gender is relatively unclear. However, research carried out is reflected in Charts Nos. 4 and 4.1. This demonstrates that as of the year 1375 (1996), the number of women was more than men and the age that dominated the region was about 65 years on average, so much so that over 48.7% of the population is currently aged 65 and over. This is such that the age groups of 0-9 and 20-39 have drastically fallen, forming 3.1% and 4.8% respectively.



| Men and Woman |     | Woman |     | Men  |     | Gender    |
|---------------|-----|-------|-----|------|-----|-----------|
| %             | No  | %     | No  | %    | No  | Age group |
| 1.4           | 5   | 0.3   | 1   | 1.1  | 4   | 0-4       |
| 1.7           | 6   | 0.6   | 2   | 1.1  | 4   | 5-9       |
| 4.9           | 17  | 1.1   | 4   | 3.8  | 13  | 10-14     |
| 7.8           | 27  | 4.9   | 17  | 2.9  | 10  | 15-19     |
| 1.4           | 5   | 0.3   | 1   | 1    | 4   | 20-24     |
| 0.9           | 3   | 0.6   | 2   | 0.3  | 1   | 25-29     |
| 1.4           | 5   | 0.9   | 3   | 0.6  | 2   | 30-34     |
| 1.1           | 4   | 0.9   | 3   | 0.3  | 1   | 35-39     |
| 1.7           | 6   | 1.1   | 4   | 1.6  | 2   | 40-44     |
| 5.2           | 18  | 3.8   | 13  | 1.4  | 5   | 45-49     |
| 5.2           | 18  | 3.8   | 13  | 1.4  | 5   | 50-54     |
| 9.6           | 33  | 7     | 24  | 2.6  | 9   | 55-59     |
| 8.9           | 30  | 4.3   | 15  | 4.3  | 15  | 60-64     |
| 48.7          | 168 | 26.7  | 92  | 22   | 76  | +65       |
| 100           | 345 | 56.2  | 194 | 43.8 | 151 | Total     |

Chart No. 4 The composition of the age and gender groups of Abianeh during the year 1375

Similarly also it demonstrates that in the year 1375 (1996), 98.3% were above 6 years of age, hence similar to the years 1365 (1986) and 1370 (1991), which showed 95% and 97.5% respectively.



2.1 Chart No. 4-2 showing comparative study in age groups against male and female count in the settlement, during the year 1375.

The average age of the inhabitants is about 55.3 to 63.3 demonstrating clearly the reason why Abianeh is perceived to be occupied by old people. Addressing the demise of ‘fresh blood’ is one of the major contributing factors in the revitalisation programme. It is only with attention given to these factors that the continuity in tradition and cultural integrity can be maintained, in addition to the upkeep of the settlement as a whole.

The gender proportional difference in Abianeh in the year 1375 (1996), was 100:128.5. This means that for every 100 men there were 128 women. A similar parallel in the year 1370 (1991) was 100:115 demonstrating that the ratio of men in the village was falling more rapidly than women.

It is also interesting to note that in the year 1374-1375, (1995-1996), the population increased by only 15 people, while 5 died and 10 left due to migration. At that time in 1375 (1996) there were no births registered (During the first 6 months of the year 1376 there was two births recorded by the health authority) .

### 6.3.5. Issues Related to the Transient Population

As stated many families from Abianeh have settled in other towns and cities. However these people generally return to Abianeh to temporary resume roles as if permanent residents. One of the main reasons for this is to seek recreation where a rural life-style and its peace still endure. The other is to monitor the upkeep of their properties, land and inheritance. The majority arrive in spring and summer. Those who may stay longer will be the retired or the aged. This is one of the reasons why properties are well maintained in some cases, so as to facilitate these visits.

There is little opportunity of tracking the numbers of transient families coming and going, to and from the settlement. However based on the in situ research and analyses, 326 people in 73 families (family unit size = 4.46) with no generation details have been registered as using the settlement in this way. In addition to this, 177 families tend to use the village in a similar way.

In this way the average transient families are calculated at 350 people who, added to the 'permanent residents' in the summer season make a population of 700 people.

The make-up of this count in terms of gender is 280 people and transient as reflected by the chart No.5 and the profile chart No.4. The gender difference is 83 people and the number of children is so small. This can be expected when the residents are temporary.



| Men and Woman |     | Woman |     | Men  |     | Gender<br>A.G. |
|---------------|-----|-------|-----|------|-----|----------------|
| %             | No  | %     | No  | %    | No  |                |
| 0             | 0   | 0     | 0   | 0    | 0   | 0 – 4          |
| 0.7           | 2   | 0.4   | 1   | 0.4  | 1   | 5 – 9          |
| 3.2           | 9   | 0.4   | 1   | 2.9  | 8   | 10 – 14        |
| 6.4           | 18  | 3.2   | 9   | 3.2  | 9   | 15 – 19        |
| 7.9           | 22  | 2.5   | 7   | 5.4  | 15  | 20 – 24        |
| 14.6          | 41  | 6.8   | 19  | 7.9  | 22  | 25 – 29        |
| 15.7          | 44  | 7.9   | 22  | 7.9  | 22  | 30 – 34        |
| 10            | 28  | 3.9   | 11  | 6.1  | 17  | 35 – 39        |
| 9.6           | 27  | 3.2   | 9   | 6.4  | 18  | 40 – 44        |
| 8.9           | 25  | 6.1   | 17  | 2.9  | 8   | 45 – 49        |
| 8.6           | 24  | 3.9   | 11  | 4.6  | 13  | 50 – 54        |
| 2.9           | 8   | 1.8   | 5   | 1.1  | 3   | 55 – 59        |
| 5             | 14  | 2.5   | 7   | 2.5  | 7   | 60 – 64        |
| 6.4           | 18  | 2.9   | 8   | 3.6  | 10  | +65            |
| 100           | 280 | 45.4  | 127 | 54.6 | 153 | Total          |

Chart No.5 The composition of the age group of the residence of Abianeh during the year 1375 A.G

= Age Group.

### 6.3.6. Sociological Studies:-

#### 6.3.6.1 The Common Unity and Culture:-

The historical evidence and social capacity of Abianeh have made it significant within all settlements of similar proportion.

The inhabitants of Abianeh have developed a cultural awareness of their own. This is one of the first impressions an outsider receives and, once the inner workings are examined one realises how rooted this actually is. In fact the average Abianeh persons are so proud of their heritage and local group identity that they protect it by avoiding integrating with outsiders. It has been demonstrated above how they keep this tradition alive through their specific cultural activities, such as their dress code, rituals, their celebrations of the month of Ramadan and the New Year celebrations, and so on.

The important point to notice is not the physical effort in retaining these traditional elements, but the intelligence and progressiveness of the people and their inner structure.

As the population of Abianeh does rise to 5,000 people, in itself, it is an illustration of the attraction held by the migrant population toward their homeland from all over Iran. This also demonstrates that the influence of other places on the transient residence of Abianeh does not overshadow their common identity and is an issue of great importance with regard to the revitalisation programme. It is therefore reasonable to suggest, and strengthens the argument, that "should the conditions locally be improved, the likelihood of the indigenous people of Abianeh returning can

be quite high”. In fact it is economic and infrastructural problems that help drive them away.

| Mixture of the old and new whilst retaining the Old character | New form and materials | Form and traditional materials | Type of proposals  |
|---|------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| 5   | 34                     | 59                             | Number of families |
| 5.1   | 34.7                   | 6.02                           | Percent %          |

Chart No.6: The statistical analyses of the opinion of the people on methods of renovation of the architectural elements and buildings.

One of the most important elements of the settlement’s sense of “awareness” is the inherent values of the built architectural form and its sense of unity. As over 60% of the inhabitants wished to have their traditional methods practised, 34% accepted the new materials and only 5% opted for amalgamation of the two “old and new”, as demonstrated by chart No.6.

What is essential to note here is the sense of belonging to the society and the place, and the importance of retaining their identity. This is a resource which can be looked into more seriously as a source of revitalisation and continuity. It is this sense of pride and insulation which has also kept others away. The rejection of other cultural



influences or cultural 'contamination' and intrusion in their lives can be observed through the lack of a hotel, restaurants, shops, or any centralised communal commercial reliance on such requirements. Besides which, all through their culture there never seems to have been any such public element or the need felt or necessity acknowledged. If there are to be any changes in Abianeh one must pay carefully attention to the consequent psychological effect on the inhabitants regarding such changes.

### 2) Co-operation and future forecast of the social aspects of the settlement.

A disappointing factor which has been uncovered through the research is a lack of confidence and deep scepticism concerning the sustainability of the settlement among the people of Abianeh. The root of this seems to be a lack of knowledge on how to find the solution, especially in revitalising the youth of the settlement. To know more about this subject area, a survey was carried out to establish the feeling of people. Chart No.7 reflects the people's view of how they see the future.

| Total | No<br>reply<br>given | Not sure               | Pessimistic |                             |                                    |                        |             | Optimistic<br>It is good | The<br>survey<br>based<br>on |
|-------|----------------------|------------------------|-------------|-----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|------------------------------|
|       |                      | Cannot be<br>predicted | Total       | It will<br>become<br>ruined | It will<br>become<br>empty<br>soon | No<br>future<br>for it | Not<br>good |                          |                              |
| 102   | 7                    | 21                     | 49          | 15                          | 18                                 | 7                      | 9           | 25                       | No                           |
| 100   | 6.9                  | 20.6                   | 48          | 14.7                        | 17.6                               | 6.9                    | 8.8         | 24.5                     | %                            |

Chart No.7 Questionnaire on the future of Abianeh by the people themselves.

In accordance with the survey, half the population has no hope of the settlement surviving. However, almost 28% of the people did not provide a decisive reply. Only a quarter were optimistic of the future. It should be noted that most of the people questioned were the temporary residents of the settlement. To establish why the replies were pessimistic about future, a questionnaire in the chart No.8 was devised.

This questionnaire is based on the family unit and the individual's position within it.

In accordance with this chart, 49% of the total inhabitants wish to leave Abianeh. The main reason given has been the lack of infrastructure, closely followed by the lack of financial incentives. The majority of the firm reply has been put forward by the heads of the families and wives. Some 51% of the questionnaire reflects the will of the people to remain in Abianeh "which is very high". However the reason for this

is not purely for will or enjoyment. In fact it is mostly reflected by the capability of the migration not being there anymore. The summary of chart No.8 demonstrates the disparity of the inhabitants in finding solutions to the difficulties associated in addressing the problems inherent to Abianeh.

Chart No.9 in eight major elements reflects the view that it is not necessarily a negative reply that has been obtained. It is therefore necessary to look at the limitations optimistically and use the replies to counterbalance the solutions. This in turn arguably contributes greatly to the revitalisation programme. The “heart of the people” is still within the place and the will to participate in its change still lingers on. However it is also clear that the youth have no wish to remain. It is the older generation who wish to retain their roots. Therefore the real challenge lies in concentrating on the young.



| Grand total                           | Total |    |    |    |    |    | Marriage  |    |    |    |   |    | Atmosphere of the settlement      |    |    |    |    |    | Lack of resource              |    |    |    |    |   | Low income |    |   |    |    |                                 | Lack of work    |    |   |   |   |  | Reason |  |
|---------------------------------------|-------|----|----|----|----|----|---|----|----|----|---|----|-----------------------------------|----|----|----|----|----|-------------------------------|----|----|----|----|---|------------|----|---|----|----|---------------------------------|-----------------|----|---|---|---|--|--------|--|
| <div>49% wish to leave of 224P.</div> | D     | S  | M  | F  | H  |    | D   | S  | M  | F  | H |    | D                                 | S  | M  | F  | H  |    | D                             | S  | M  | F  | H  |   | D          | S  | M | F  | H  | <div>Reply</div>                |                 |    |   |   |   |  |        |  |
|                                       | 28    | 39 | 10 | 12 | 21 | 3  | 5   | 0  | 2  | 0  | 2 | 3  | 1                                 | 1  | 0  | 10 | 16 | 5  | 6                             | 12 | 5  | 9  | 2  | 0                                       | 5          | 8  | 6 | 2  | 3  |                                 | 4               | No |   |   |   |  |        |  |
|                                       | 109   | 25 | 35 | 9  | 10 | 18 | 2   | 2  | 4  | 1  | 0 | 1  | 2                                 | 0  | 0  | 9  | 14 | 4  | 9                             | 10 | 8  | 4  | 8  | 1                                       | 0          | 4  | 7 | 5  | 1  |                                 | 2               | 7  | 3 | 6 | % |  |        |  |
| <div>51% wish to stay of 224 P.</div> | Total |    |    |    |    |    | Inability to live in the city Old age and deterioration |    |    |    |   |    | Existence of family and relatives |    |    |    |    |    | Good income from working here |    |    |    |    | I am use to Abianeh and the way of life |            |    |   |    |    | I like Abianeh for its own sake | No              |    |   |   |   |  |        |  |
|                                       | D     | S  | M  | F  | H  |    | D   | S  | M  | F  | H |    | D                                 | S  | M  | F  | H  |    | D                             | S  | M  | F  | H  |   | D          | S  | M | F  | H  |                                 | Wish to         |    |   |   |   |  |        |  |
| 115                                   | 8     | 10 | 21 | 27 | 49 | 0  | 0   | 7  | 4  | 15 | 2 | 4  | 7                                 | 10 | 8  | 0  | 0  | 1  | 2                             | 1  | 2  | 4  | 4  | 12                                      | 5          | 4  | 3 | 8  | 12 |                                 | No              |    |   |   |   |  |        |  |
| 100%                                  | 6     | 8  | 18 | 18 | 42 | 0  | 0   | 61 | 3  | 13 | 1 | 3  | 61                                | 8  | 6  | 0  | 0  | 0  | 1                             | 0  | 1  | 3  | 3  | 10                                      | 4          | 3  | 2 | 6  | 10 |                                 | Stay in Abianeh |    |   |   |   |  |        |  |
|                                       | 96    |    |    | 9  | 6  |    |   | 7  | 48 |    |   | 74 | 48                                | 7  | 96 |    |    | 87 | 74                            | 87 | 74 | 48 | 48 | 44                                      | 35         | 48 | 1 | 96 | 44 |                                 | %               |    |   |   |   |  |        |  |

H= Grand parents, F=Father, M=Mother, S=Son, D=Daughter

Chart No.8: Result of questionnaire of the residents and temporary residents of Abianeh as a whole family unit including their grandparents.

| Total | Agricultural<br>difficulty | Leaving<br>of the<br>young | Lack of<br>medication | Lack of<br>education | Lack<br>of<br>jobs | Lack<br>of<br>income | Lack<br>of<br>water | Lack of<br>amenities | Type of<br>problem<br><br>Difficulty |
|-------|----------------------------|----------------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|----------------------|--------------------------------------|
| 151   | 12                         | 6                          | 8                     | 7                    | 24                 | 49                   | 15                  | 30                   | No.                                  |
| 100   | 7.9                        | 4                          | 5.3                   | 4.6                  | 15.9               | 32.5                 | 9.9                 | 19.9                 | %                                    |

Chart No.9: Difficulty in living in Abianeh from the point of view of the permanent resident

## 6.4 Literacy

The Number of literates of 6 years and above in the year 1375 was 44.5% which comprised 93 male and 58 female. The rate in the year 1365 and 1370 was 41.2 % and 47.8 respectively. Taking into account the age group, this is a very high figure for a relatively remote settlement, in a country like Iran and in the context of its national statistics. According to the field survey, 57% have basic primary education and 18.2% have skills with 23.6% having a diploma and a (staggering) 19% have higher education including a few PhD holders! The ones that have integrated with other parts of Iran and who belong to the temporary group of residents were of higher educational

bracket.

The questionnaire revealed that 18.1% had basic literacy, 12.9% a skill, 45% a diploma and 24% had higher education and a diploma.

The ability to integrate with the outside world is probably due to their higher educational attainment, and distribution among the people. This in turn is yet another useful element to the revitalisation programme. "The existing resource of the people to project themselves" merits further investigation and exploration. The state of education proves also what an advanced civilisation Abianeh has had, notably with regard to their women and daughters. This is actually quite unique in the country as a whole and illustrates the advanced cultural state of the people and their inherent intelligence projecting beyond their locality to other regions.

### **6.5. Commercial and Occupational Research:-**

#### **6.5.1. Commercial**

The general commercial view as outlined notes that commercial life evolved around agriculture, orchards and livestock, all within the traditional methods. Indeed the majority of the woman work alongside their men, while the majority of the orchards and livestock are family run and managed by the family itself. The water as stated above was distributed through a well maintained system of directing the flow of seven springs through the settlement and rationing it in accordance with carefully devised laws and rules of the settlement, all managed within its communally elected 'gatekeeper'.



Grain barley and potatoes formed the basic need of the settlement a variety of fruits, especially, apples, plums, pears, almonds and walnut were also exported to the neighbouring cities and ranked very highly in quality at a national. The fruit which was retained would be dried or made into "Lavashak"<sup>1</sup>.

In the hills of Abianeh Katira, Dermaneh and Khakeshi grow untamed in abundance in the valleys and hills around the settlement. In the past history of the commercial activities of the settlement, these played an important part in the exporting capability, an activity which has practically ground to a total stop now.

The livestock of Abianeh in its past prime reached 500 cows along with 5,500 goats and sheep. This had been an integrated part of everyday living until today.

The weaving of carpets became very fashionable and profitable during the Safavid period. The local practice followed the Joshegan and Kashan styles of weaving. This tradition also died with the migration of the youth from the settlement. Only a few people still engage in occasional production, mainly for their own needs or as a 'once a year' source of income for a single family.

Shoemaking or Giveh<sup>2</sup> at one time in Abianeh was of the highest quality in the country and was essentially the produce of women of the settlement, which was most uncommon elsewhere. This also is a trade now totally lost to the settlement.

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<sup>1</sup> Lavashak:- is a sheet of dried fruit obtained by a process of mixing fruit and preparing a fluid mixture which is then pored on to a flat area and laid to dry naturally in the sun.

The art and craft of silver smelting and smiting during the pre-Pahlavi period was most popular in the settlement. Some examples of this can be still seen, but due to lack of raw materials and ongoing interest, this craft has also become almost extinct. Recently however a single shop has been opened in the middle of the settlement nearby the Jameh mosque, and is following the tradition once more.

Dying clothing and making special garments by the ladies of the settlement has also been a most famous trade of the settlement. It had been established to such an extent that whole families used to dye clothing and yarns as their sole work. Natural materials such as pomegranate skins were solely used to obtain the red colour of the floral patterns on the clothing worn. The remains of the grinding stones can still be observed around the settlement. Today all their produce is externally purchased, much cheaper and easily made available in artificial colouring sourced from the Far East through the cities of Kashan, Natanz and Isfahan. Tourism has always played an important part of daily life in Abianeh. Today tourism has recognised Abianeh as within the top ten places of interest in the entire country. Whosoever travels to Kashan is often encouraged to visit Abianeh. Yet no economic contribution is made to the homesteads other than payments for the occasional dried fruit. Collectively, the above trades lost have been recorded and proposed as matters of interest to be reinstated into the settlement as part of the revitalisation programme. See Chart No.10. This demonstrates the optimism of the people to regenerate the skills they once knew.





The number of people with work during the year 1365 was 199 in total. The average amount of people at work was 40% and the level of people leaving dropped to 2.5%.

In accordance with the field study carried out these numbers appear too high. Perhaps there was a degree of hidden redundancies contained within the figures and perhaps some of the transient residents were also included.

However it is the drop in these numbers during the year 1365-70 which demonstrates the demise in the sustainable work force and locally available work.

According to the fieldwork carried out in the summer of 1376, only 58 people were working in Abianeh, which lowers the average working force to 16.8%, bearing in mind that the upkeep of most of the elders are being subsidised or borne by their relatives who have migrated to other parts of the country. The reflected effect is shown in the chart No.10.1

| State and type of work |             | Commercially Active |         |             |               |         |        |          |         |           |         |               |              |           |  |
|------------------------|-------------|---------------------|---------|-------------|---------------|---------|--------|----------|---------|-----------|---------|---------------|--------------|-----------|--|
|                        |             | Non Active          |         |             |               |         |        |          |         |           |         |               |              |           |  |
|                        |             | Commercially Active |         |             |               |         |        |          |         |           |         |               |              |           |  |
| Total                  | Out of work | House wife          | Retired | Shop keeper | Office Worker | Teacher | Driver | Labourer | Builder | Carpenter | Plumber | Dairy produce | Agricultural | Regions   |  |
| 24                     | 0           | 2                   | 3       | 0           | 2             | 2       | 2      | 3        | 0       | 2         | 2       | 4             | 3            | Panj Ali  |  |
| 23.9                   | 0           | 2.7                 | 4.1     | 0           | 2.7           | 2.7     | 2.7    | 4.1      | 0       | 2.7       | 2.7     | 5.5           | 4.1          | %         |  |
| 12                     | 0           | 4                   | 1       | 1           | 1             | 0       | 0      | 0        | 0       | 0         | 0       | 0             | 6            | Ziaratgah |  |
| 16.4                   | 0           | 5.5                 | 1.4     | 1.4         | 1.4           | 0       | 0      | 0        | 0       | 0         | 0       | 0             | 8.2          | %         |  |
| 12                     | 1           | 1                   | 0       | 1           | 0             | 1       | 0      | 1        | 0       | 0         | 0       | 1             | 6            | Pal       |  |
| 16.4                   | 1.4         | 1.4                 | 0       | 1.4         | 0             | 1.4     | 0      | 1.4      | 0       | 0         | 0       | 1.4           | 8.2          | %         |  |
| 13                     | 2           | 1                   | 0       | 0           | 0             | 0       | 0      | 0        | 0       | 0         | 0       | 0             | 10           | Yosman    |  |
| 17.8                   | 2.7         | 1.4                 | 0       | 0           | 0             | 0       | 0      | 0        | 0       | 0         | 0       | 0             | 13.7         | %         |  |
| 12                     | 0           | 0                   | 0       | 1           | 1             | 0       | 1      | 0        | 1       | 0         | 0       | 1             | 7            | Paeendeh  |  |
| 16.7                   | 0           | 0                   | 0       | 1.4         | 1.4           | 0       | 1.4    | 0        | 1.4     | 0         | 0       | 1.4           | 19.6         | %         |  |
| 73                     | 3           | 8                   | 4       | 2           | 3             | 3       | 3      | 4        | 1       | 2         | 2       | 6             | 32           | Total     |  |
| 100                    | 4.1         | 11.9                | 5.5     | 2.7         | 4.1           | 4.1     | 4.1    | 5.5      | 1.4     | 2.7       | 2.7     | 8.2           | 53.8         | %         |  |

Chart No.10.1 State of commercially active and non-active regions of Abianeh

In accordance with this chart 78.5 % of the workforce is pursuing commercial activities and 21.5% are totally inactive. 53.8 % of the work force is in the agriculture sector and only 8.2% are involved in industrial produce, while 38% is engaged in a supportive role for those in work.

This demonstrates the reliance on a limited economic base and its related work force. This lack of diversity of workforce and produce is yet another reason why the settlement has declined. The inhabitants' inability to change with modern times and within the framework of their culture and working skills is ironic: "They have survived the greatest cultures and impact of changes of government and great upheavals during thousand of years of upheavals. But nothing had prepared them for the modernity and infiltration of modern times".

In other words, Abianeh has not been able to compete commercially, socially and industrially with the required replacement commercial goods of the neighbouring cities and the central government's importations, in order to optimise its viability and to survive in the sea-change of a commercially aggressive world. Its aged back has here been broken under the pressure of compatibility and sustainability.

### 6.5.3 Commercial Relationships

There is no visible commercial special link from Abianeh to any of the other surviving villages. In other words Abianeh had its own system of direct link with the outside world. Chart No.11 demonstrates the fieldwork related to peoples' needs and where these were obtained.



| Abianeh | Natanz | Kashan | Tehran | Location<br><br>Type of goods and services in % |
|---------|--------|--------|--------|---|
| 9.1     | 59.1   | 25     | 6.8    | Food stuff                                      |
| 11.1    | 31.1   | 35.6   | 22.2   | Clothing  |
| 2.8     | 28.6   | 45.7   | 22.9   | House hold goods                                |
| 78.3    | 10.9   | 0      | 10.9   | Medical and health                              |
| 0       | 75     | 25     | 0      | Primary school                                  |
| 25.8    | 35.2   | 24.7   | 14.3   | Total in %                                      |

Chart No.11 The source of importation of goods and services to the settlement

This demonstrates the strong link with Natanz and Kashan, the two neighbouring cities. Considering the distance to the capital Tehran, it is most important that this contact is maintained. This also demonstrates an inner management of the dwellers own management while meeting the demands of the country through its network of a "Bazaar" system & characterised by their dealers' bulk purchasing and distributing to

retailers across the country.

**6.5.4 The Current Architectural and Planning projects being considered by the private sector with central government consent.**

The nation is now becoming conscious of the value of settlements such as Abianeh and has set out a programme of work to be undertaken in order to combat what is happening to these settlements across the country.

a) Setting up of a weaving factory.

This factory has been set up privately to plant cotton and to bring in additives for the production of cotton string weaving and artificial strings. With a capacity of 1,000 tonnes/year, this factory has been located outside the settlement in an area covering two hectares with a covered area of 3,400 m<sup>2</sup>. This will create 20 jobs in the area.

b) Construction of a fish farm outside the settlement.

This is a privately funded development which is in the planning stage. The project relies on the good quality and abundance of fresh spring water in the region sourced from the surrounding hills.

c) A showroom for Abianeh handicrafts.

This facility opened in the early part of 1976. Funded privately it is intended to create incentives for selling local produce.

d) Other projected projects.

These include:

i) Water storage and management plant, for a spring water bottling factory, a private venture.

ii) Jihad-e-Sazandegi, a governmental institution looking into mass housing in the region.

iii) Private hotel funded by at least three parties - the sons of several inhabitants, the National Heritage agency, and private developers.

Regrettably none of the above is undertaking the development for the right reason. They all intend to exploit the settlement and have not paid any attention to benefiting the settlement, nor have they addressed the issues being outlined. Ultimately these plans will become yet another example of the misuse of local resources and will detrimentally affect the agriculture and life-style of the region.

These points yet again to the fragility that historical settlements of real value such as Abianeh possess. The reasons why a settlement, such as this, was originally conceived will gradually also be overtaken and, like everything else which is easily consumed by greed and ignorance, this too will be purchased by city people and commercially minded forces within the country. Conversely the revitalisation plan will incorporate such legislation and forward planning to protect these very natural resources and the stability of man and his environment in this region. A control is being proposed to prevent any exploitation of the region in an unreasonable way.



**6.6. Study of the State of Tourism in Abianeh**

The traditional form of tourism in Abianeh is an old one and has its roots as far back as 2500 years ago, being at its peak in the Safavid period. Abianeh always had been to the forefront of all Iranian rulers until today. In recent years many people, both national and international, have sought out Abianeh. This curiosity about the place and its people has now reached an international dimension. However none of this interest and these visits materially benefits the settlement in any way substantial. In fact in some cases residents are upset by the intrusion. However the majority of the residents enjoy these visits and present themselves with a welcoming affability. This demonstrates the openness and the warmth of the people and a cultural characteristic which is imbedded in all aspects of their lives.

The interesting and the intriguing are evident in the different layers of important cultural customs and dwellings in Abianeh which are noticeably unique. Layers of different building types, their natural settings and the inhabitants have fascinated people for ages until now.

The contemporary tourist moves through the settlement with amazement in response to its mechanism noting object after object and from house to house – but not really aware of the inner structure, its evolution or roots. Rapid increases in an influx of tourism from all over the world is overwhelmingly destructive and devoid of any real benefit to the economic and commercial advancement of the settlement. In order to understand the inhabitants' reaction to this phenomenon, a series of surveys was carried out.

| Ahwaz | Isfahan | Tehran | Travelling base                 |
|-------|---------|--------|---------------------------------|
| 7.2   | 35.7    | 57.1   | Percentage influx<br>of tourist |

Chart No. 12: The Influx of Tourist from Three Main Destinations.

| Relaxation | Nature Air and<br>water | Architecture of<br>Abianeh | Reasons for<br>travelling |
|------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|---------------------------|
| 21.4       | 35.7                    | 71.4                       | Ratio in %                |

Chart No.13: The Reasons for Travelling and Visiting Abianeh by Tourists

It is important to point out that 72% of the visitors arrive by private cars while 28% rely on private bus services. There are no public services to Abianeh provided by the central government or regional authorities. The majority of people using the bus service were in fact relations of the local inhabitants or the temporary residents of Abianeh.

Further research as reflected by chart No.13 establishes that the majority of visitors come to see the architecture. Almost all of the visitors who seek to relax comprise the previous inhabitants who have still roots there. However, some 64% of the visitors to

Abianeh are new to the area. 27% have visited for the second time and 9% are regular visitors. Almost 93% of the people involved in the questionnaire were there with their families. Only 7% turned up with friends.

As there are no public amenities in Abianeh, the visitors can only come on a short stay basis and no-one visits for more than one day at a time.

In other words, the visits tend to be short in duration and sandwiched between other site visits for the main private tours organised by the tourist companies who utilise the nearest city of Kashan for longer stay visits because of the available facilities there.

Separate research was also carried out into the level of education of the visitors as a means of establishing the kind of people who were attracted to this kind of settlement.

See Chart No.13.1:

| Secondary education and Diploma | Students of higher education | Above diploma pre university | University level | Advance masters and above |
|---------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------|---------------------------|
| 9.1%                            | 22.7%                        | 36.4%                        | 22.7%            | 9.1%                      |

**Chart No.13.1: Classification of Education of the Visitors to the Settlement.**



This demonstrates that the visitors are amongst the educated sector of the communities in the country at large. This is an important issue. In the textbooks of Iranian education, rural life is favourably depicted and referred to in order to annotate the roots of traditional life and the characteristics of a typical national identity. This is the idea of “Natives” who represent a national image of an uncontaminated pure life and everyday living. It is also relevant to tourists as their visit means more to them than a sightseeing phenomenon. The national impression of Abianeh has always been consistent with a place of great interest and educational references to anthropological, historical and cultural values, which are (somehow) still intact.

The problems faced by visitors which the surveys demonstrated were mainly:

- a) Inability to visit Abianeh with any public transport.
- b) Poor display boards and signage to the settlement along the route,
- c) Inability to purchase basic foodstuffs and other daily needs,
- d) Inability of staying overnight or resting for any significant period,
- e) Lack of access to buildings or any guide brochures etc.
- f) Lack of any local guide,
- g) Lack of public utilities, wash areas or drinking areas,
- h) Lack of communication system or shops in general,

- i) Limited handcrafts and locally produced souvenirs.

The above elements were the cause of very superficial and short visits by tourists to Abianeh. In turn, they had very little impact on the economic growth of the settlement. In this way one of the major sources of finance to the settlement has been denied.

## **6.7. Spatial Confirmation and its Essential Research and Elements**

The research is concerned with the structure of the settlement in terms of its built environment as an essential base of the settlement. This is to assist in later understanding of the existing conditions.

The essential elements were located and recorded. These are then examined in terms of the types of usage, number of storeys, types of ownership, the conditions of current use, types of occupancy and all types of services and systems used.

### **6.7.1 The Type of Use or Usage of the Dwellings**

By careful analyses of the five main regions of the settlement and by surveying the existing uses, an understanding of the kind of densities and concentrations of different uses of dwellings within the settlement in each district or zone, can be established.

Chart No.14 outlines the results obtained from this ground survey.

| Total |     | Stables and storage |    | Health and Utility |    | Cultural |    | Religious |    | Offices |    | Commercial |    | Residential |     | Type of use       |
|-------|-----|---------------------|----|--------------------|----|----------|----|-----------|----|---------|----|------------|----|-------------|-----|-------------------|
| %     | No  | %                   | No | %                  | No | %        | No | %         | No | %       | No | %          | No | %           | No  | Name of Zone      |
| 100   | 65  | 3.1                 | 2  | 0                  | 0  | 0        | 0  | 1.5       | 1  | 4.6     | 3  | 3.1        | 2  | 78.7        | 75  | PanjAli           |
| 100   | 75  | 9.3                 | 7  | 1.3                | 1  | 1.3      | 1  | 1.3       | 1  | 4       | 3  | 2.7        | 2  | 80          | 60  | Ziarat Gah        |
| 100   | 127 | 2.4                 | 3  | 0                  | 0  | 0        | 0  | 1.6       | 2  | 0       | 0  | 0.8        | 1  | 95.3        | 121 | Pal(baladeh)      |
| 100   | 133 | 7.5                 | 10 | 2.3                | 3  | 0        | 0  | 3         | 4  | 0.8     | 1  | 2.3        | 3  | 84.2        | 112 | Yousman (Miandeh) |
| 100   | 172 | 10.5                | 18 | 17                 | 3  | 0        | 0  | 1.2       | 2  | 0       | 0  | 0.6        | 1  | 86.1        | 148 | Paendeh           |
| 100   | 572 | 7                   | 40 | 1.2                | 7  | 0.2      | 1  | 1.7       | 10 | 1.2     | 7  | 1.6        | 9  | 87.1        | 498 | Total             |

Chart No.14: Distribution of house types in accordance with their usage and location throughout the settlement.



This summary establishes that there are 498 buildings in Abianeh, which encapsulate 87.1% of the urban footprint. The public utility and commercial content is minimal. After the residential grouping seven percent comprises the agricultural buildings and the remainder other than residential<sup>3</sup>. In Abianeh there are 10 religious buildings, or 1.7%, which comprises 8 mosques, the Imamzadeh and fire temple (excluding the Tekieh where the Nakhil is kept or the Hinza Temple outside the settlement).

The research also demonstrates that the new buildings in the settlement, such as the offices, educational and commercial buildings, are located in the new areas including PanjAli and Ziaratgah.

### 6.7.2 Number of Storeys and Heights of Building Types

The natural development of the house type has had a specific relationship with the number of storeys of a building, but also in its interaction with nature.

The majority of the buildings in Abianeh are two storeys high. A clear distinction is made by the work established in chart No.15. Of all the buildings in Abianeh, 48.3% are single storey and 43.9% are double storey and some (6.6%), due to extensive repairs required, and are classified as 'not clear'. The reason for high storeys was a consequence of the slope and shape of the mountainside, which dictated natural access while providing the best structural support at different levels. This is evident in areas such as Baladeh "Pal" or Miandeh "Yosman" which have stepped hillsides resulting

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<sup>3</sup> Most of the livestock was kept in the hills and housed in "Ziag" the underground storage chambers.

in an increase in the heights of two storey buildings. Yet in new areas such as Panj-Ali or Ziaratgah, this is not the case and these places tend to have a gentler topography.

| Total |     | Not related |    | Not clear |    | Three stories |    | Two stories |     | Single story |     | No. Stories | Region    |
|-------|-----|-------------|----|-----------|----|---------------|----|-------------|-----|--------------|-----|-------------|-----------|
| %     | No  | %           | No | %         | No | %             | No | %           | No  | %            | No  |             |           |
| 100   | 70  | 1.4         | 1  | 7.1       | 5  | 0             | 0  | 28.6        | 20  | 62.9         | 44  |             | Panj Ali  |
| 100   | 75  | 0           | 0  | 2.7       | 2  | 0             | 0  | 32          | 24  | 65.3         | 49  |             | Ziaratgah |
| 100   | 138 | 0           | 0  | 7.2       | 10 | 0             | 0  | 50          | 69  | 42.8         | 59  |             | Pal       |
| 100   | 133 | 1.5         | 2  | 6.8       | 9  | 0.8           | 1  | 57.1        | 76  | 33.8         | 45  |             | Yosman    |
| 100   | 172 | 1.7         | 3  | 7.6       | 13 | 0             | 0  | 40.1        | 69  | 50.6         | 87  |             | Paendeh   |
| 100   | 588 | 1           | 6  | 6.6       | 39 | 0.2           | 1  | 43.9        | 258 | 48.3         | 284 |             | Total     |

Chart No.15 Description of Abianeh in terms of its development and regions.

This study helps to determine structural zoning in the revitalisation programme.

### 6.7.3 Type of Construction and Structure of Buildings

The essential construction materials of Abianeh are the hay reinforced mud, local timber, together with natural stone and all of this comprises 53% of Abianeh. The most intact areas true to the traditional constructional methods of the settlement are the region of Pal or the region of Bala Deh, "the upper part of the settlement towards the main gate", the Ziaratgah area, and the Paeen Deh, "the lower part of the settlement", together with the Mian deh, "the middle of the settlement" or Yosman as it is known. The other regions are mostly built with bricks and timber forming 16.8% of the dwellings, while the remainder of 10.9% are made from brick and steel. These buildings tend to be in the more recently constructed areas of the settlement.

Chart No.16 demonstrates the results of the ground survey.



| Total |     | Unclear |    | Other |    | Khesht<br>(Mud<br>bricks) and<br>Timber |     | Stone<br>and<br>Timber |    | Bricks<br>and<br>Timber |    | Bricks<br>and Steel |    | Structure<br>of building |
|-------|-----|---------|----|-------|----|---|-----|------------------------|----|-------------------------|----|---------------------|----|--------------------------|
| %     | No  | %       | No | %     | No | %                                       | No  | %                      | No | %                       | No | %                   | No |                          |
| 100   | 65  | 4.6     | 3  | 0     | 0  | 4.6                                     | 3   | 3.1                    | 2  | 36.9                    | 24 | 50.8                | 33 | Panj Ali                 |
| 100   | 75  | 4       | 3  | 2.6   | 2  | 25.3                                    | 19  | 2.6                    | 2  | 37.3                    | 28 | 28                  | 21 | Ziaratgah                |
| 100   | 125 | 0.8     | 1  | 0.8   | 1  | 87.2                                    | 109 | 0                      | 0  | 8.8                     | 11 | 2.4                 | 3  | Pal<br>(Baladeh)         |
| 100   | 133 | 6.8     | 9  | 28.6  | 38 | 46.6                                    | 62  | 0                      | 0  | 16.5                    | 22 | 1.5                 | 2  | Yosman<br>(Minadeh)      |
| 100   | 172 | 7.5     | 13 | 20.9  | 36 | 63.4                                    | 109 | 0                      | 0  | 4.6                     | 11 | 1.7                 | 3  | Paeendeh                 |
| 100   | 570 | 5.1     | 29 | 13.5  | 77 | 53                                      | 302 | 0.7                    | 4  | 16.8                    | 96 | 10.9                | 62 | Total                    |

Chart No.16: Constructional building material in each region.

### 6.7.4 Types of Ownership

The result of ownership is reflected in chart No.17, which demonstrates that 88.1% of Abianeh is owned freehold and 6.6 % is under leasehold.

| Total |     | Other and not clear |    | Freehold |    | Free hold |     | Appropriative "belonging to charity" |    | Public |    | Type of ownership |
|-------|-----|---------------------|----|----------|----|-----------|-----|--------------------------------------|----|--------|----|-------------------|
|       |     |                     |    | Joint    |    |           |     |                                      |    |        |    | Name of regions   |
| %     | No  | %                   | No | %        | No | %         | No  | %                                    | No | %      | No |                   |
| 100   | 65  | 0                   | 0  | 0        | 0  | 90.8      | 59  | 4.6                                  | 3  | 4.6    | 3  | Panj Ali          |
| 100   | 75  | 1.3                 | 1  | 0        | 0  | 90.7      | 68  | 1.3                                  | 1  | 6.7    | 5  | Ziaratgah         |
| 100   | 127 | 0                   | 0  | 7.9      | 10 | 89.8      | 114 | 1.6                                  | 2  | 0.8    | 1  | Pal               |
|       |     |                     |    |          |    |           |     |                                      |    |        |    | (Baladeh)         |
| 100   | 133 | 1.5                 | 2  | 10.5     | 14 | 84.2      | 112 | 3                                    | 4  | 8      | 1  | Yosman            |
|       |     |                     |    |          |    |           |     |                                      |    |        |    | (Minadeh)         |
| 100   | 172 | 2.9                 | 5  | 8.1      | 14 | 88.4      | 151 | 1.2                                  | 2  | 0      | 0  | Paeendeh          |
| 100   | 572 | 1.4                 | 8  | 6.6      | 38 | 88.1      | 504 | 2.1                                  | 12 | 1.7    | 10 | Total             |

Chart No.17: Ownership of properties in relation to their location within the settlement.

### 6.7.5 The Conditions of Usage of Residential Buildings

The condition of the typical building demonstrates in general a depressed habitation in decay. Chart No.18 establishes that 336 houses or 67.5 % of all house types are used for a short period during the year and are mostly empty. They tend to be occupied

during spring and summer seasons only. In addition to this, 7.6% are completely empty. In other words 75% tend to be completely empty most of the year, as noted in Chart No. 18.

106 houses, that is to say, 21.3%, are being used by a total population of 345 people. This is on average 3.25 people per dwelling. The majority of empty houses are found in the Miandeh region and the least are found in Paeendeh and Panjali. The highest use is the Ziaratgah and Panjali areas and the least use is the Paeendeh.



| Total |     | Unclear |    | Seasonal<br>usage |     | Empty<br>property |    | Constantly<br>used |     | Type of<br>usage    |
|-------|-----|---------|----|-------------------|-----|-------------------|----|--------------------|-----|---------------------|
| %     | No  | %       | No | %                 | No  | %                 | No | %                  | No  | Location            |
| 100   | 5   | 17.5    | 10 | 49.1              | 28  | 3.5               | 2  | 29.8               | 17  | Panj Ali            |
| 100   | 60  | 0       | 0  | 58.3              | 35  | 10                | 6  | 31.6               | 19  | Ziaratgah           |
| 100   | 121 | 0.8     | 1  | 69.4              | 84  | 7.4               | 9  | 22.3               | 27  | Pal<br>(Baladeh)    |
| 100   | 112 | 0.9     | 1  | 64.3              | 72  | 11.6              | 13 | 23.2               | 26  | Yosman<br>(Minadeh) |
| 100   | 148 | 4.1     | 6  | 79.1              | 117 | 5.4               | 8  | 11.5               | 17  | Paeendeh            |
| 100   | 498 | 3.6     | 18 | 67.5              | 336 | 7.6               | 38 | 21.3               | 106 | Total               |

Chart No.18: Distribution of residential housing in accordance with occupancy in each territory or region.

### 6.7.6 Types of Occupancy

As one might expect, and is indeed confirmed in Chart No.19, the occupancy of land is high at 77.6%. However, 16.6% was not found to be relevant due to ambiguity of usage, 3.5% is generally run by the public sector, while 1.7% is being used illegally and only 0.5% is rented.

| Total |     | Unclear |    | Not related |    | Public-governmental |    | Free |    | Least |    | Owned |     | Type of ownership   |
|-------|-----|---------|----|-------------|----|---------------------|----|------|----|-------|----|-------|-----|---------------------|
| %     | No  | %       | No | %           | No | %                   | No | %    | No | %     | No | %     | No  | Location            |
| 100   | 65  | 13.8    | 9  | 0           | 0  | 6.2                 | 4  | 9.2  | 6  | 1.5   | 1  | 69.2  | 45  | Panj Ali            |
| 100   | 75  | 13.3    | 10 | 0           | 0  | 8                   | 6  | 2.7  | 2  | 2.7   | 2  | 73.3  | 55  | Ziaratgah           |
| 100   | 127 | 8.6     | 11 | 2.4         | 3  | 1.6                 | 2  | 0.8  | 1  | 0     | 0  | 86.6  | 110 | Pal<br>(Baladeh)    |
| 100   | 133 | 11.3    | 15 | 6.8         | 9  | 3                   | 4  | 0.8  | 1  | 0     | 0  | 78.2  | 104 | Yosman<br>(Minadeh) |
| 100   | 172 | 9.9     | 17 | 12.2        | 21 | 2.3                 | 4  | 0    | 0  | 0     | 0  | 75.6  | 130 | Paeendeh            |
| 100   | 572 | 10.8    | 62 | 5.8         | 33 | 3.5                 | 20 | 1.7  | 10 | 0.5   | 3  | 77.6  | 444 | Total               |

Chart No.19: Representation of Abianeh in terms of its occupancy and region.

### **6.7.8      Type of Existing Facilities, Services and Systems Available**

Abianeh has one telecommunication office with 256 lines and it is planned to have another centre at later date. Currently 46% of the population have telephone lines. In addition to this, there exists a public centre of communication. This is a phenomenon of recent years and, not so long ago; there was only the main public communication centre.

Ziaratgah and Panjali have the maximum private lines installed.

Almost 99.2% of the settlement has electricity and a water pipe to the door stop.

The drinking water is piped through a 5km long pipeline obtained east of Abianeh from a location known as "Doabbi". It has an underground storage tank. However due to the storage system of water, this service is generally unreliable and in most seasons, areas such as Pang Ali and Ziaratgah have major water storage problems. This storage facility is one of the main problems of the settlement today.

The level of amenities in the houses and dwellings in general was also surveyed and is reflected in Chart No.20 which demonstrates the significance of storage and animal feed silos as being of crucial importance in the lives of the people.



| Telephone | Electricity | Water | Stable | WC   | Storage | Bathroom | Oven | Kitchen | Type of<br>installation<br><br>Location |
|-----------|-------------|-------|--------|------|---------|----------|------|---------|---|
| 48.6      | 97.1        | 97.1  | 37.9   | 96.6 | 100     | 75.8     | 27.6 | 96.6    | Panj Ali                                |
| 64.7      | 100         | 100   | 38.5   | 92.3 | 92.3    | 69.2     | 15.4 | 100     | Ziaratgah                               |
| 38.1      | 100         | 90.5  | 62.5   | 93.8 | 87.5    | 50       | 37.5 | 87.5    | Pal<br><br>(Baladeh)                    |
| 42.3      | 100         | 100   | 52.2   | 91.3 | 91.3    | 26.1     | 4.3  | 73.9    | Yosman<br><br>(Minadeh)                 |
| 40.7      | 100         | 96.3  | 61.5   | 84.6 | 8.8     | 34.6     | 15.4 | 80.8    | Pacendeh                                |
| 46        | 99.2        | 96.8  | 50.5   | 82.2 | 90.6    | 50.5     | 19.6 | 86.9    | Total                                   |

Chart No.20 Distribution of facilities and services in the settlement, expressed per dwelling in each sector.

## **6.8. Analyses, Testing and Solutions to the Inherent Problems and Latent Possibilities of Abianeh.**

In the sections concerning the research and the familiarisation and existing conditions examined, the subsequent analyses give rise to possibilities of reaching a decision as to the solution for the settlement's revitalisation programme. Consequently it is now possible to summarise the causes and effects on the settlement through the medium of time. This summary of accumulated work is represented below.

### **6.8.1 The Issues and Capability of Population Constraints**

The issues related to the population, the population issues and problems can each be addressed in the following way:

The speedy migration/exodus of portions of the population from 1345, the lack of new opportunities locally, and the newly formed incentives found within the inner larger cities, along with the pressures of the 'invisible' central government's pricing and import policies on agricultural goods, all contributed to the demise of the settlement. This fast evolving exodus from Abianeh has led to a true demise of the settlement and therefore must be considered a terminating factor in its existence and sustainability. Should this trend be allowed to continue, what will be left is a new set of 'alien' inhabitants and an almost near total ruin, known as Abianeh. An imbalance in the age groups and an overwhelming lack of young people in the settlement, over thirty years, has resulted in a disproportionate amount of the elderly, who also have no hope of programming a future for the settlement. Consequently any future decision must take into account this factor.

### **6.8.2 The Capacity of the Population**

If the transient temporary population of Abianeh were to become more permanent and if they were to adopt a more active role as to the day-to-day affairs of the settlement in the traditional style, then this would certainly have a major effect on the settlement's potential for improvement.

### **6.8.3 Difficulties in Social Capacity**

Social Difficulties:-

The social difficulties in Abianeh today are different to other issues there and are an entity in their own right. It has been established that in Abianeh the people did not historically mix with outsiders and, although very hospitable and welcoming, very little outside integration has apparently ever been accepted or recorded. The recent influx of new wealth and new residents, especially in the Panj Ali region, has promoted a social tension in the settlement and a sense of insecurity. No longer do the locals quickly establish where the newcomers are from and why or how they may fit in the infrastructure, if at all. This in itself is promoting a division between the older, establish residents and the newcomers.

Deep suspicion of the future, the deterioration of livestock quality and numbers, the eroding discipline of life as it use to be, and the lack of attention to these issues, are matched by a collective pessimism towards an inevitable demise reflected in the research findings. Both residents and temporary residents are deeply concerned.

The opposition of the indigenous people to any dramatic change or modernity, a lack



of interest in upgrading and renovating the buildings, not allowing other third parties such as National Heritage to positively intervene with restoration and ownership programmes, are also attributable "mostly due to lack of funds or a mistrust of outside interference".

### 6.8.4 The Social Possibilities of the Settlement

The cultural inheritance and the social bonds throughout the settlement in terms of the ownership of properties and the rituals and overall social behaviour are still a good potential resource of reintegrating life back into the settlement.

Self-awareness and a social bond, along with a capacity to adopt and expand have always been available historically. Cultural links with the outside world and Abianeh's sense of history contribute to a strong theory for these issues and for reviving the elders in Abianeh into a self-motivated, self-ruling authority as demonstrated in the past. This will significantly help in such a programme of revitalisation.

An insistence on their identity and conformity to a uniformed disciplined life-style when back in the settlement complemented by the rituals of Ashurah and 'Nau Ruz' and other social events across the settlement, will help further in a positive projection of the culture into a new age of revitalisation.

The willingness of the indigenous people to participate in an active role in any revitalisation programme also demonstrates the existence of the energy and the vision of the people in the context of their limitations and possibilities.

## 6.9. The Problems and Commercial Possibilities

### 6.9.1 Commercial Difficulties

From the research into the existing conditions it becomes quite apparent that one of the rooted difficulties has been the ever-growing commercial difficulties and the loss of trade through the settlement. The implications for occupations and work for the inhabitants are echoed in an inability to sustain any viable commercial produce and the continuing reliance on traditional methods of agriculture and livestock grazing.

Hence the lack of new trades and the creation of jobs to replace the traditional methods, in keeping with the current requirements of general goods and food stuffs, is consistent with the low level of income generated by the limited number of people at work and a lack of sustainability of the level of life-style suited to this day and age. Unfortunately these contribute to a need to leave and the consequent lack of reinvestment in the settlement.

This point is illustrated in the lack of resources to support the tourist trade, which have never been given adequate attention.

Similarly the lack of investment into communication and transportation systems and better links to neighbouring cities, exert a toll.

### **6.9.2 The Commercial Possibilities of Abianeh**

Abianeh has the following commercial potential:

A high level of tourism in the spring and summer seasons,

Fruit and vegetable reserves which, to some extent, can be strengthened to service the commercial need,

Possibilities of creating industrial plants based on the traditional methods of weaving and those industries related to agriculture and animal husbandry. (Currently there are some private investors seriously examining such plans for the region,

Strengthening of the arts and crafts industry, including Giveh or hand-made shoes, (Private investment is also being considered for reviving this traditional craft),

Strengthening and developing the herbal medicine (cottage) industry by applying commercial techniques for the indigenous plants in the area, backed up by an export driven marketing strategy.

### **6.9.3 The Problems and Attractions of Tourism**

Difficulties in Tourism:

The absence of suitable provisions for tourism results in the following difficulties~:

1. Lack of an appropriate infrastructure and facilities to process tourism,
2. Lack of hotels or bed-and-breakfast residences available to the tourist - no apparent provisions for accommodation and rest severely limits the tourist's stay to a few hours at best,



3. Lack of guides, tourist information or highlighted areas of interest,
4. Lack of advertising, brochures and pamphlets for Iranian and international visitors to the settlement.

#### **6.9.4. The Possibilities for Tourism and its Enhancement of the Settlement's Viability**

As the research results confirm, the way of life, the buildings and the different layers of the settlement's functions and its specificity, provide adequate reasons for developing tourism based on strengthening the existing resources while welcoming and facilitating the tourist.

#### **6.9.5 The Difficulties of the Physical Environmental and Social Configuration.**

The Difficulties:

The infrastructure of Abianeh is weathered and has significantly decayed, some of it beyond repair. The factors contributing to this phenomenon are:

1. The restrictions of rebuilding with modern materials and retaining the original identity. This has led to a confusion associated with restoration projects where the wishes of the people and the building regulations imposed by the National Heritage agency and the local authority, are in conflict. The lack of finance and inappropriate building regulations have led to a conflict of interest and misuse of building materials by local people and a general confusion in government offices, such as those of the district surveyors and building regulation officers, with regard to expertise and

guidelines, necessary to control the changes. The conflict over ownership and an apparent lack of interest in developing or repairing properties, in part due to a lack of indigenous skills and resources, that can be identified with the art of traditional restoration, are quite apparent.

2. Temporary residences and empty properties over long periods, but without regular maintenance. The lack of maintenance of common areas, such as roads, squares and public buildings such as Asiab (Mill), Abanbar (wells), mosques and other similar public places, is apparent. New developments in the Ziaratgah and Panjali districts are identified with new building types, advanced technological systems and foreign residents, each exerting more pressure on the inner core of the settlement.

### 6.10 The Possibilities

For the revitalisation of the structure of the settlement two systems are available:

- a. A change of use of the existing building fabric into a new use, in line with the contemporary requirements. The majority of the requirements of each revitalisation initiative can be housed within the existing structure of the settlement. It will then have the desirable combined effect of renovation, rehabilitation and refurbishment.
- b. To locate new functions in areas where the main structure can be controlled and yet utilised for other areas, which in turn can be serviced more easily and have the least impact on the settlement. Examples are areas to the east and west of the settlement which can enjoy ease of access and servicing.

## 6.11 Summarised Subjects of Guidelines and Policies to Help With the Revitalisation Programme

The solution to providing correct guidelines is found in two contradictory but inseparable matters which need to be considered: the supervision and control of the built environment and the cultural effects of the settlement as a body of national importance through heritage.

It follows that the expansion of the natural development of life should be in conjunction with development of a reasonable role for spatial configuration and its adoption to new functions. This in turn comprises two elements:-

- i)- Careful amalgamation of the new with the older generic fabric of the settlement.
- ii)- Proposals for new changes and the role of the functions within the capability of the inhabitants. This should be understood within the context of their interaction as the core of the proposal with specific attention being paid to the following:

Aiming to prevent migration and to create permanent residents,

Aiming to increase the number of young people of the settlement,

Aiming to capture the trust of the people in the new system and to ensure their participation and roles within it,

Aiming to create an infrastructure based on a sustainable work force and available jobs, with one hundred percent participation of a local management.



### 6.11.1 Summary of Guidelines and Proposals

Main guidelines which can have a positive effect, based on realistic politics, proposals and programmes, can be suggested as follows:

- a. To revise the manner in which the central government and the officials view the culture. Typically the view of a revitalisation programme is somewhat single sided in terms of buildings only. The solution involves having them look at the settlement in its entirety, but with its inhabitants and their sustainability as the core issue. In helping them develop policies laterally, a coherent overall policy and regulations will result,
- b. To set up a committee chosen by the people from the elders according to historical precedent and without the intervention of outsiders,<sup>4</sup>
- c. Strict controls over new proposals and their implications through the local committee. These will be based on researching and planning for the new redevelopment.
- d. The development of a viable infrastructure to support annual living through all seasons for residents and visitors alike.
- e. To develop legal, commercial and social structures based on the settlement's own history and preferred methods of working, in keeping with the traditional and cultural background.

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<sup>4</sup> Currently the decisions are made by some elders and appointed bodies from outside (Local Government representatives) the settlement, on any dispute or decisions taken concerning civil rights or other subjects.

- f. To attract outside investment in the redevelopment of industrial and agricultural produce and the tourism industry,
- g. To enable mobility and distribution of produce and packaging to the other settlements and cities.<sup>5</sup>

### 6.11.2 Summary of the Aims and Practical Guidelines

The policymaking and decisions leading to practical change have to be taken with the control of the inhabitants and local government combined. The recommendations are as follow:

- a) To formulate a representative team from Abianeh that should be well briefed about the external decisions and expectations. This grouping will be drawn from the representatives of the National Heritage agency and representatives from the Municipality of Isfahan, the Ministry of Culture representatives from Isfahan, representatives from the Ministry of Urban Development in Isfahan, representatives of the "Farmandari" or Judicial system of Isfahan, Kashan or Natanz, the local representative of parliament of the Islamic Republic of Iran (Majles Depute), the representatives of the magistrates of Isfahan, representatives of (both permanent and temporary residents) Abianeh, the representatives of private investor groups, and officials from the Planning and Budget Organisation of the Islamic republic of Iran.

Policies should be drafted and taken through all the different stages of law in order to establish a local governing body for Abianeh - one that the local people will accept

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<sup>5</sup> Currently the majority of the fruit produce is abandoned on the trees due to a lack of human resources in harvesting.

while being acceptable to the national government. Note should be taken in that, in Iran's contemporary society, autonomy of the natives of Abianeh is no longer feasible. Today's law and order and judiciary processes are no longer allowed to be decentralised. Conformity to the country's laws is imperative to the modern Islamic Republic. What is needed therefore is a fusion of local, traditional and cultural legislative laws, which cater for the region, yet conform to the country as a whole, and especially within the laws of Islam. After the Islamic Revolution in Iran a representative of the government was assigned to the settlement.

b) To establish a base for control of funds and, in particular, the settlement's commercial fund and budget. The participation of the settlement's elders and the representatives of the National Heritage agency can be perceived as an effective form of control by the local people, backed up by the guidance of the building regulations experts stringently upholding the integrity of the inner and outer conservation belts, as outlined elsewhere. The development of a self-reliance system, whereby the locals are given freedom of operating their lives to an extent by regenerating their own value systems and customs, recalls the experience of past centuries. In this way the indigenous people's involvement is maximised and reliance on central government is rendered minimal. Some of the financially viable schemes can be implemented at early stages and can have an immediate effect on the settlement. Examples include adopting existing housing for use as bed and breakfast accommodation or as short stay hostels or by converting into traditional restaurants serving both the local community and tourists. Such initiatives should be collectively co-ordinated with programmed visits of set tours to the settlement and adapted to the conventions of seasonal use. The encouragement of financing initiatives can be facilitated by allowing



special consents for local people to borrow money at low interest rates in order to develop their properties,

c. Issuance of grants and central government allocation of a yearly budget for the infrastructure work to the settlement,

d. Encouragement of the setting up of co-operative schemes to involve people in most aspects of common services and local individuals' units, allowing more people to join and benefit in the long term,

e. Allowing external investment based on involving locals to operate business initiatives and being party to profit sharing. While the locals will provide the land and property, the investors are to develop and finance the redevelopment and conversion programme.

f. Providing a complete building regulation and planning regulation to be implemented, in order to retain the valuable elements of the built environment. Therefore planning permission for any new development will be in total co-ordination with the normal conventions and procedures of obtaining and processing drawings and meeting the National Heritage criteria.

g. The conservation of most of the new elements of work within the settlement to be incorporated in the existing building stock. This will help preserve each building with its own identity, thereby aiming to revitalise the urban fabric at the same time as generating work, finance and building on the infrastructure of the settlement. The most prominent types, several located along the main route or "Rushteh", can help focus on and preserve the historical roots of its most permanent buildings. Thus a

priority list based on a careful survey is required to be compiled. This should be aimed at having a central control for processing guests and tourists and making certain that the resources are aimed at:

- h. Profit making: Paying salaries and creating new jobs,
- i. Budgeting for furthering expansion and renovation of the settlement based on a form of council tax which is then reinvested in the settlement under the direction of the council of the Elders,
- j. The establishment of a club for the indigenous people of Abianeh, both permanent and transient residents. By bringing them together, with the purpose of re-establishing and maintaining their traditional ways and to continue with retaining their social and cultural traditions such as involving themselves in the ceremonies and helping to select their leaders, they can come to terms with a conscious communal effort towards a revitalisation programme. This would be a unique opportunity to re-establish their destiny,
- k. Expansion and investment in maintaining light industrial produce, such as handicrafts, silverware, weaving textiles, carpets, etc.
- l. Setting-up an official guide who can set up a programme of tours on daily basis around the settlement while charging for the services provided,
- m. Preparing and restoring the natural resources of Abianeh and making safe the general buildings in ruin, arranging fitness walks and tours around the settlement's historic core noting its urban roots and surrounding countryside, and outer locations such as Ziaratgah of Henza "Henza Temple", the forts and the traditional

routes along the river to other settlements.

n. Total stoppage to the current new-build programme and the incorporation of alien building techniques and materials such as steel. The intervention of the National Heritage agency in setting up a subsidised carpentry shop provided with adequate equipment and tools will help maintain a correct architectural application of works across the settlement.

o. Relocation of new-build works to the outer zone identified by this research. Industrial units and the ingress of new activities can be located to the west of the settlement.

p. The imposition of a total stoppage on any kind of restoration, renovation and conversion work by law. Any such work in future must be in total compliance with the National Heritage guidelines. The integration of the new with the traditional methods of construction must give priority to the aesthetic and logic of construction across the settlement and its structural zoning. The planning authorities must embrace new negotiated ways of involving the residents in determining the logic of space and propriety of scale and size of different elements. "This is an important point as no standard building regulation will apply to this kind of development".

### **6.11.3      Summary and Suggested Proposals Concerning the Revitalisation Programme**

**Reflection:** It is hoped that this report will form a tangible beginning to a new approach in understanding and implementation of revitalisation programmes of this nature. Such an approach need not be specific or confined to Abianeh alone,



but to places of historical importance. Perhaps having started a revitalisation programme, Abianeh can be regarded as a living workshop for further investigation into this type of direct approach, which can be adapted and applied to other historical settlements worthy of action.

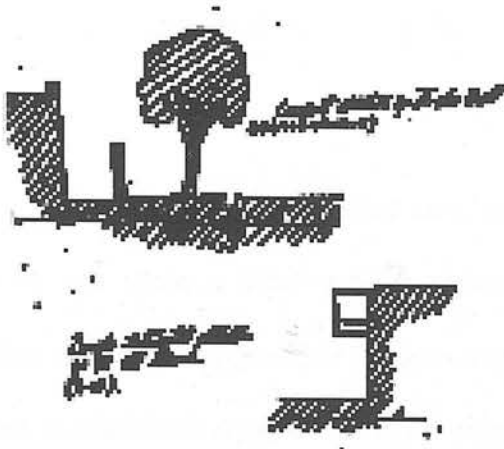
In this section due attention through the research has been given to the varieties and aspects of the social and cultural forms and functions, traditional and social behaviour, and commercial and programming strategies, It is important to examine actual proposals, by looking at the examples of typical deviations from the traditional to the new, but always mindful of the solutions.

### **6.12. Variations and Deviations**

Changes to the built fabric already taken place and the changes outside the village gate to the west of the settlement require attention.

One of the obvious changes to building types is the imported regular terrace housing characterised by front lawn with gate and a rear patio. This is a totally new element within Abianeh, yet is a familiar and a typical inner city planning housing type and form, adopted almost in every major city in Iran.

These buildings not only pay little or no attention to the continuity of the settlement's identity, but import alienation through modern technologies. A plano-metric syntax which is way too advanced for a settlement such as Abianeh and totally strips down the indigenous values to those representative of a simplified, plain international style of housing made out of bricks, concrete and steel.



It is exactly this kind of alienating typological imposition, which brings with it all kinds of inconsistency in its sociological and street-housing-people relationship. It must be prevented.

Lack of attention to this process by the National Heritage agency, the cost of modern techniques when compared with the old, the availability of simple trades to construct the new buildings, the loss of the old buildings and the loss of the old building trades, all have contributed to a phenomenon, where buildings inside the settlement receive similar constructional treatment. Inadequate building regulations and a lack of awareness about the merits of preservation of the existing buildings and retaining the continuity of the built fabric, have led to a total misunderstanding and confusion of what should be done.

On one hand the inhabitants are leaving due to a lack of a sustainable lifestyle and houses which are badly maintained, while on the other the inhabitants who wish to stay need to renovate their houses.

Yet there are no guidelines or building regulations or preservation orders to follow

and planning/building proposals are looked at subjectively with no particular attention accorded to the details.

In recent years however, a growing awareness has now been established and the National Heritage agency has taken a more serious approach to applications and consents of this type. This mainly has a cosmetic dimension and does not specifically examine the cultural and architectural context. However supervision of construction, the use of timber instead of steel, the use of hay reinforced mud for basic finishes and flat roof construction, have been implemented.

There is still a total lack of building regulations and supervision by the official bodies with reference to or acknowledgement of the fundamental constructional techniques and the traditional design elements. As demonstrated, this need is absolutely necessary if the character and style throughout the settlement are to be retained and saved for posterity.

### **6.12.1 The Changes inside the Settlement within the Historical Areas**

Fortunately due to the ownerships being in single plots and each being restrained to its neighbouring boundaries, mass restoration or renovation with new materials has been typically confined to single plots in one location. Therefore the whole of Abianeh is still substantially intact in terms of its overall characteristics. However at a local level the individual 'improvements' have created a total contrast to the settlement's fenestration and form.

The absolute essence of the historic development and the current conditions



can be summarised as noted below. It is imperative that these must be acknowledged and understood:

1. The specific ownership of properties and their intertwining boundaries,
2. The influence of the natural falls in determining the shapes of houses,
3. The retention of boundaries of the housing adjoining mountains and gardens
4. The percentage of properties which are not restorable due to their critical loss of structural integrity, but which should be made stable and safe against any potential damaging of neighbouring buildings,
5. The alien architecture and materials used within these areas to be restored sympathetically.
6. The problems with sanitary systems and the incorporation of new water and sewage pipes to be incorporated sympathetically,
7. All access to the inner core by the use of motor vehicles to be prohibited and this proscription to be rigorously enforced.

Chapter Seven:

**The Proposal for the Revitalization  
Program**

## **Chapter Seven:**

# **The Proposal for the Revitalization Program**



## Chapter Seven: Proposal for Revitalization Programme

### Introduction:

Almost ten years to the day the writer first set foot in Abianeh, the first draft of this dissertation was prepared. During these same ten years a number of Abianeh residents, who involved themselves in various aspects of the study, have passed on from this temporal world. Without their enthusiasm, knowledge and generosity, it is problematical whether or not this work would have satisfactorily addressed the core issues affecting the settlement and, indeed, whether or not the proposed revitalisation programme would have been truly relevant to those surviving residents of Abianeh.

At the outset of the study, it was necessary to attempt an understanding of the context of the settlement of Abianeh within its natural environment, its national, regional and immediate geographic neighbourhood, and the historical continuum of its remarkable people. Against this background the need for a revitalisation programme was discussed in Chapter 1 by initially addressing the problems of a dearth of hard information. Consequently a permanent visual record was identified as an absolute necessity before any evaluation of the settlement's needs could be realistically addressed. Into this latter category, analyses dealing with the plano-metric syntax of the settlement, the building typologies and the existing conditions prevailing at the time would follow on from the graphical results of defined surveying methodologies.

Any visual record, whether tabulated statistical data or drawings depicting the layout and architecture of the settlement, requires a context and the latter was provided by initially addressing the climatic and geographical phenomena associated with

Abianeh. As noted in Chapter 2, the prevailing wind patterns, the incidence of precipitation and temperature variations, when set against the background of regional geology, erosion patterns and topographical character, ultimately helped determine optimum building forms and their orientation, all within the context of an evolving urban form.

The history of the settlement as noted under Chapter 3 reveals a progressive evolution that can arguably be traced back to the time of Alexander the Great. In terms of architectural development, the styles and forms of buildings clearly owed their 'pedigrees' to pre-Islamic antiquity and a knowledge of indigenously derived construction techniques where local stone was utilised for foundations and mud-brick for the superstructure. As elsewhere in Iran, with the advent of Islam, the Zoroastrian traditions commenced an inevitable decline. Abianeh, thanks to its geographical seclusion, was able to retain much of the old ways in terms of an urban continuity within its rural setting of pastures, orchards and fields. However the hill forts and fire temple made way for the bath houses and mosques of the Saljuk period leading on to the Safavid dynasty, which in turn preceded the later Zand and Qajar periods. In all this time however, an historical continuity is evident - on careful consideration of the people's traditions and their approach to architecture, especially through decoration.

The settlement's unique character is as much an expression of the people's ingrained spirit as it is a display of intriguing architectural forms within a memorable urban setting. Every wall, building, street and alley bears testimony to a collective human endeavour that can be measured over several or many generations. As noted in chapter 4 the social and historical customs were concerned with a sense of discipline and propriety no better expressed through correct commercial interactions. Such

consistency has led to multiple ownerships of buildings expressed through separate access at different levels. Interior and exterior decoration of buildings similarly reflected this respect for time honoured practice and, ultimately, the entire community was mobilised seasonally at the times of the great pageants, for example, when the heavy and symbolic Nakhil was paraded along set routes through the town from various key buildings and on to the next.

Chapter 5 undertook a comprehensive examination of the essential architectural and building phenomena that dominate the overall urban fabric of the settlement. Preceded by an appraisal of building construction within a town planning context, a typological analysis of the essential architectural forms led on to the specific form of the settlement and the natural forces at work. It was argued that the specificity of the urbanism can be understood against the natural phenomena and the influence of nature on the settlement, while the architecture was readily appraised through recognising a design discipline that acknowledged correct orientation, geometry and proportions for the building types. Historically Abianeh was experienced by passing through a hierarchy of primary, secondary, tertiary and minor circulation routes that linked all buildings while determining the nature of the traffic and goods. By recognising the architectural language of design inherent to these extant buildings, followed by a study of correct construction practice and detailing, it was a relatively straightforward task to recognise those features of contemporary building practice that are alien to the settlement - whether entire buildings or the intrusive insertion of modern materials and components.

Consequently the need for a methodology that is tailored to recording the extant physical condition of the settlement was identified, then formulated and applied.



Careful analysis of these results helped provide a basis for devising a conservation strategy that, in turn, comprised much of the subject matter of chapter 6.

However an appropriate strategy must be concerned with the people along with their social, legal, economic and cultural framework, hence very real human needs must be addressed. On the one hand, while it was considered absolutely essential to retain the indigenous people of the settlement in order to maintain their livelihoods and to encourage the return of the 'missing generations', it was also established that the future urban integrity of the settlement was hugely associated with the need for a control mechanism that could be targeted at irregular growth by unchallenged development, otherwise associated with the 'quiet invasion' by outsiders from elsewhere in Iran. Consequently an ambitious survey of the residents of Abianeh covered a variety of subjects ranging from migration of people from the settlement, the numbers of families, the second generation and their families, along with the make-up of age groups and genders, to literacy levels, the mixtures of occupations and associated commercial activities. Data associated with buildings were concerned with such subjects as contemporary tourism and the limited facilities for visitors, spatial configuration, the types and uses of buildings, number of storeys and building heights, structural and constructional systems, ownership systems, and so on.

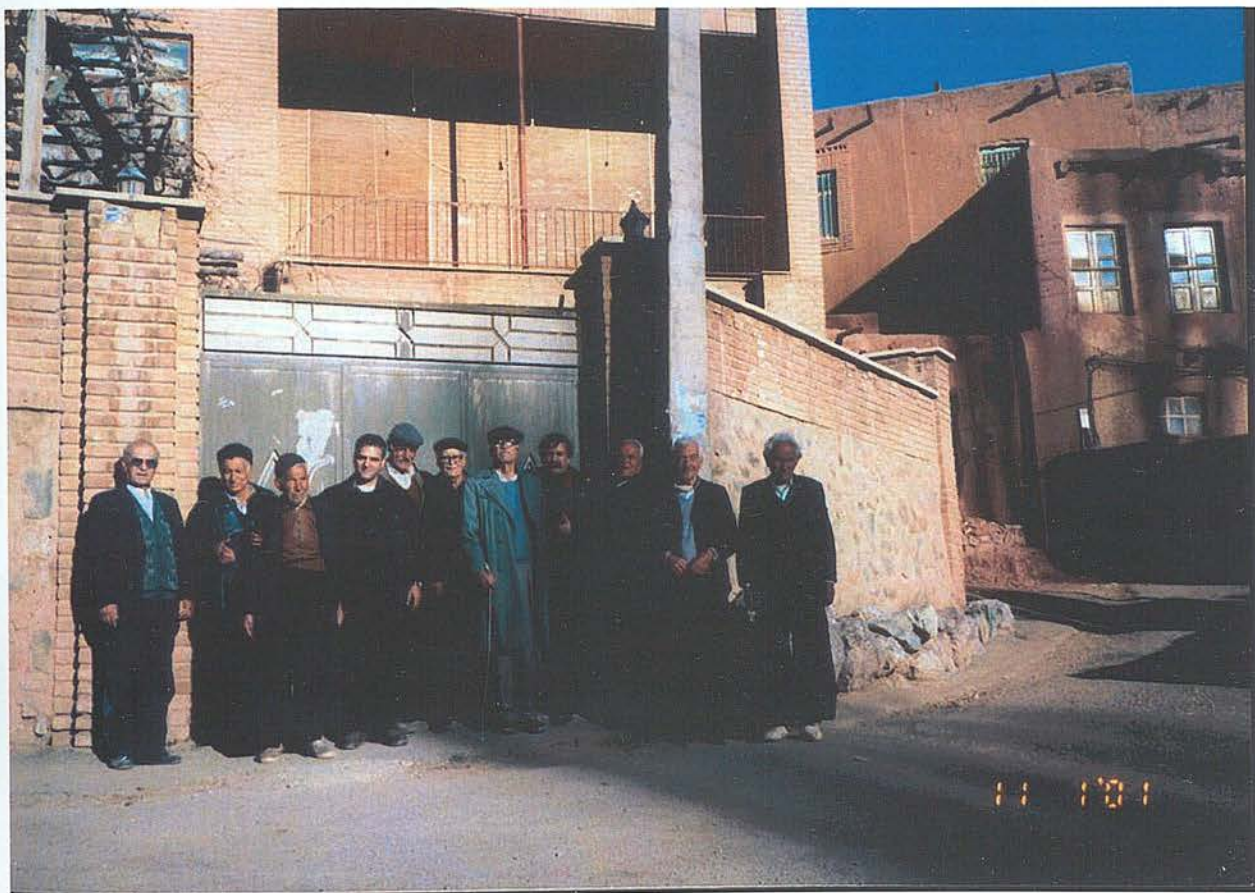
These in turn led the study toward addressing a series of linked topics including: the social possibilities of the settlement, a variety of social problems, and various commercial possibilities for Abianeh, and lastly but not least, the problems and attractions of tourism. However, difficulties associated with physical, environmental and social configuration are essentially influenced by the quality of integration, so a series of summarised subject guidelines and policies was developed to help in

structuring the proposed revitalization programme. By the conclusion to the study, proposals for the rules of renovation and restoration, and the implementation of a conservation belt, could be compared with the rules and regulations for the outer zone of the settlement. Consequently the absolute factors were addressed by applying the diagnostic study and the associated research results toward a permanent solution for Abianeh's future recovery and prosperity,

Chapter 7 is concerned with proposals and recommendations for a restoration programme. The first is concerned with the systematic restoration of a 'model building' which can act as a template for the community and the statutory authorities. The second states that all internal routes be dedicated to pedestrians and the third deals with the creation of new town 'squares' at either end and on the outside of the settlement, as 'breathing spaces' for the community, while offering the practical utility of car parking. The importance of the 'Rashteh' and other key circulation routes in and around the settlement precedes the fifth recommendation which is concerned with the creation of designated camping sites on the fringes of the settlement. A final proposal is concerned with the creation of community funds through the levying of a toll on visitors, thus underscoring the heritage value of Abianeh.

In outlining a series of final if cautionary detail recommendations that pertain to building regulations, survey records of building interiors, ownership of lands including orchards, fields and gardens, and a moratorium on further building works to the settlement, the last chapter has effectively reviewed the entire study of Abianeh. As noted above, this study concludes with a message that recovery, while following years of human neglect and urban decay, is not only possible and desirable, but

attainable through a carefully considered strategy characterised by the correct deployment of resources backed up by a resurgent community willingness to succeed.



The Village elders who contributed towards the research. Sadly some of whom are no longer with us.



Chapter Seven: Proposal for a Revitalization Programme

Proposals for a Revitalization Programme

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## 7.1.                   Proposals for a Revitalization Programme:-

To revitalise and to give life back to a settlement as demonstrated in this research is not simply a matter of understanding the built environment or any isolated field of human existence in a built environment, but a collective whole of all its aspects and intricacies which then give rise to its true identity and provides us with adequate clues to identify problem areas and to strengthen the areas which need to be addressed in the revitalization program.

It is in fact only through this identification of various elements, which identifies the whole, that this process is achievable. In almost exactly the same way as tracing DNA of a particular species, every historical settlement has its imprint. As long as there are sufficient elements to this DNA in existence then it is possible to trace the roots of a settlement in demise and re-establish its essential ingredients for it to sustain itself.

In the light of the above research, which has identified the different layers of problems and the essential valuable infrastructure of the settlement, certain facts have emerged that should be adopted as key components of any brief established to address the work to be undertaken as essential to any revitalisation programme. These recommendations and actions can be summarised graphically and technically in this way:-

1. An appropriate building in need of repair should be carefully selected by the National Heritage Agency and purchased, by law if need be, with the purpose of redeveloping and restoring the property for the primary use as the central technical unit of the settlement and an exemplar of restoration and technique. This building

should be used for the sole purpose of monitoring and overseeing the redevelopment Programme. This will require the community of elders and the National Heritage Agency to work hand in hand. All quarried materials and necessary resources should be obtained and maintained from this office (Figure 351). The functions governing planning permission, building warrants, building grants, community expenditure funds, community consultations, exhibitions, and so on, should be managed from these premises. Additional functions concerning new requirements for tourism, hotels, shops, back-up offices and utility spaces, should all be developed within the existing houses along the Rashteh (the main thoroughfare through the settlement) as demonstrated in the researchers proposed structural zoning plan below, Figure 342.

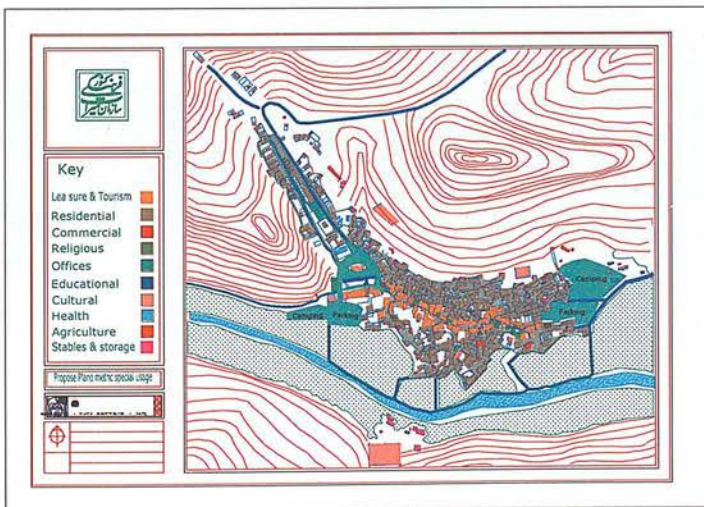


Figure 335 : The structural zoning plan proposed by the researcher, a complete survey and drawing of the existing built fabric and its conservation plan “a total solution”.



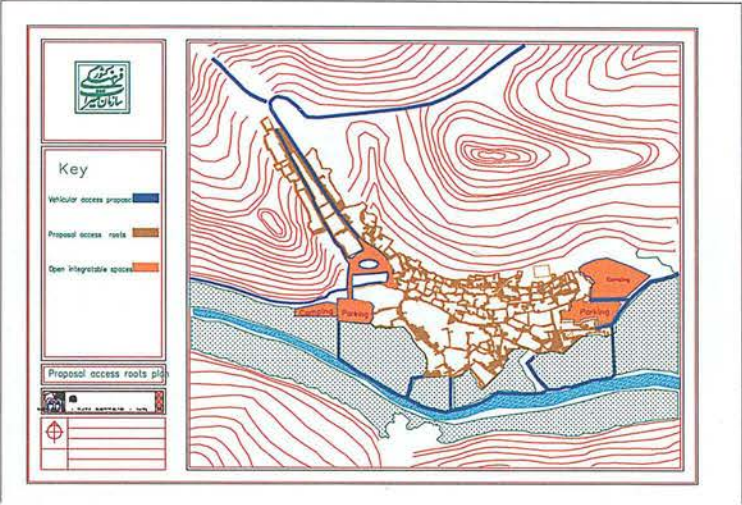


Figure 336: Proposed variation in Vehicular Access roots plan and restriction to public transport roots through the settlement.

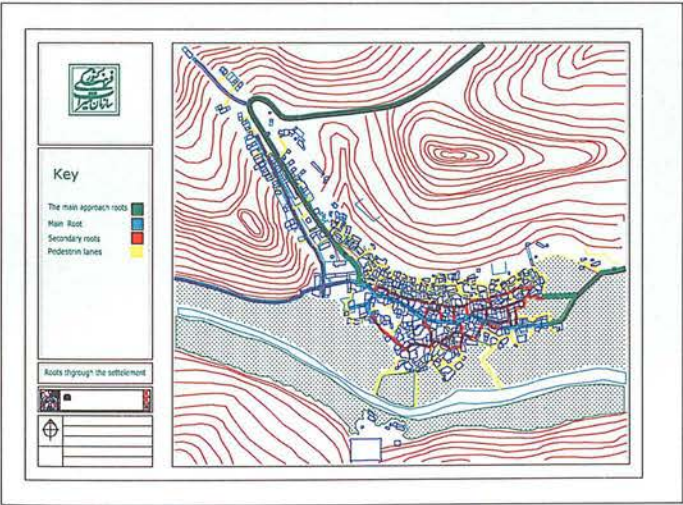


Figure 337: The new plan of the Identification and preservation of the primary and secondary roots through out the settlement.

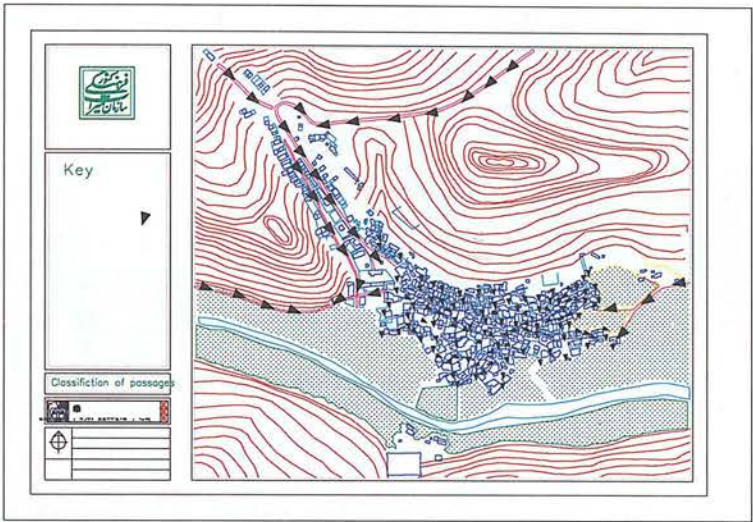


Figure 338: The new proposed preservation of the falls and roots of surface water drainage and prevention of flooding.

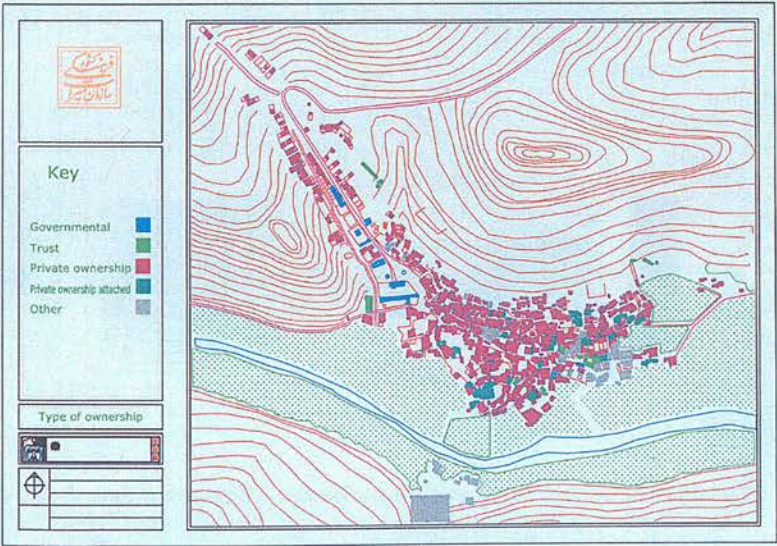


Figure 339: The researchers established Ownership plan



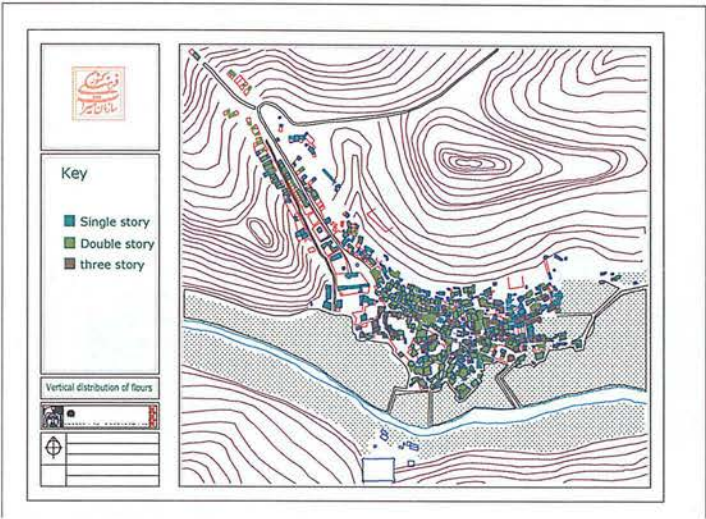


Figure 340: Protection of skyline and prevention in over riding the construction rules of neighbourhood and the roof tops.

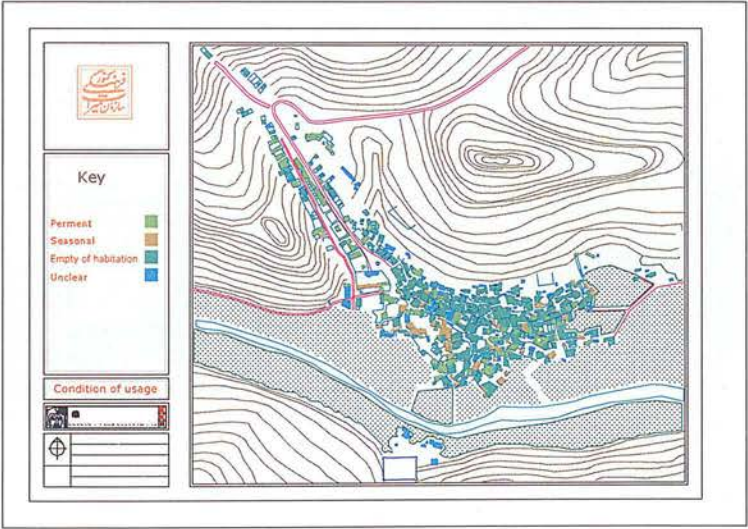


Figure 341: Proposed, a complete condition survey, prevention of neglecting properties by their owners in relation to their usage.



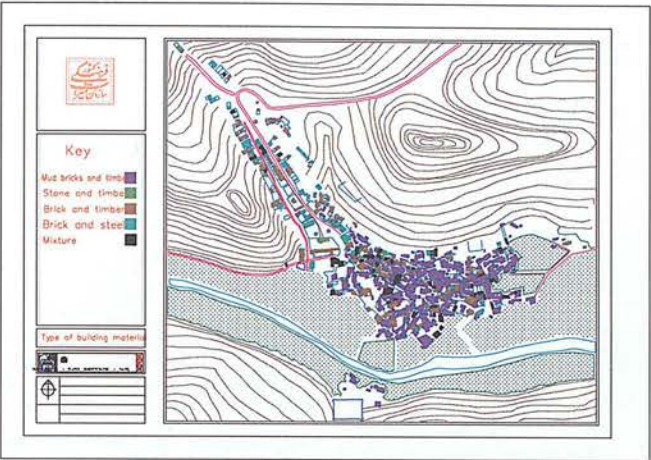


Figure 342: A complete survey over the prevention of misuse of building material in conservation area.

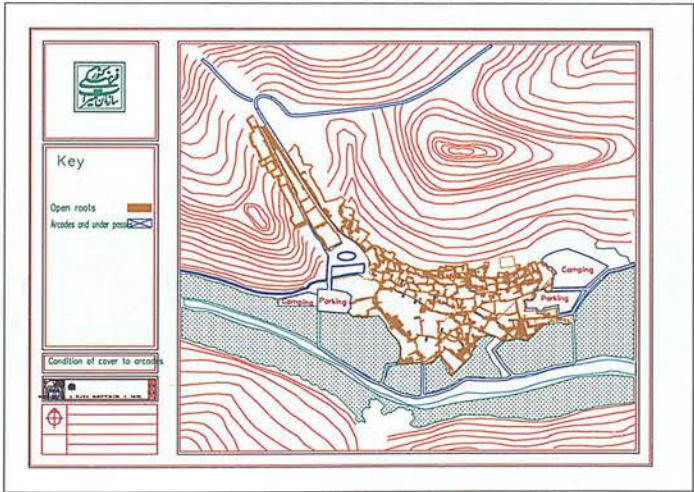


Figure 343: Conservation of the underpasses and bridging across main roots.

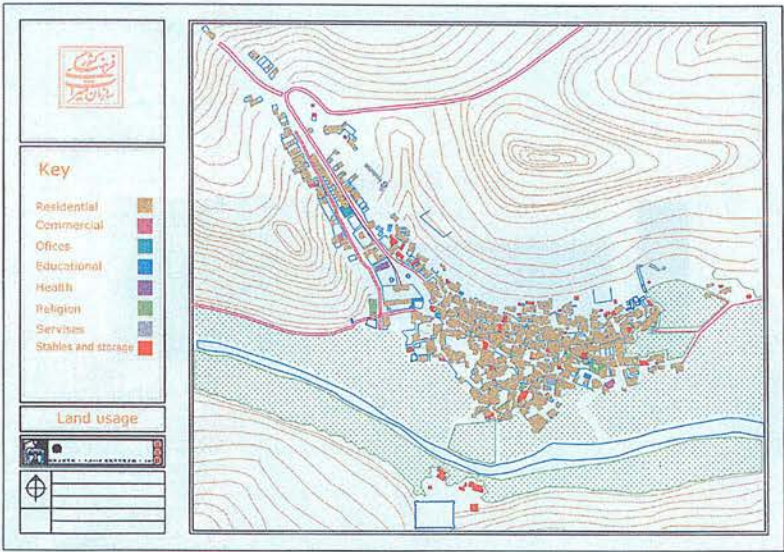


Figure 344: The researchers established existing analyzed usage of dwellings with in the settlement.

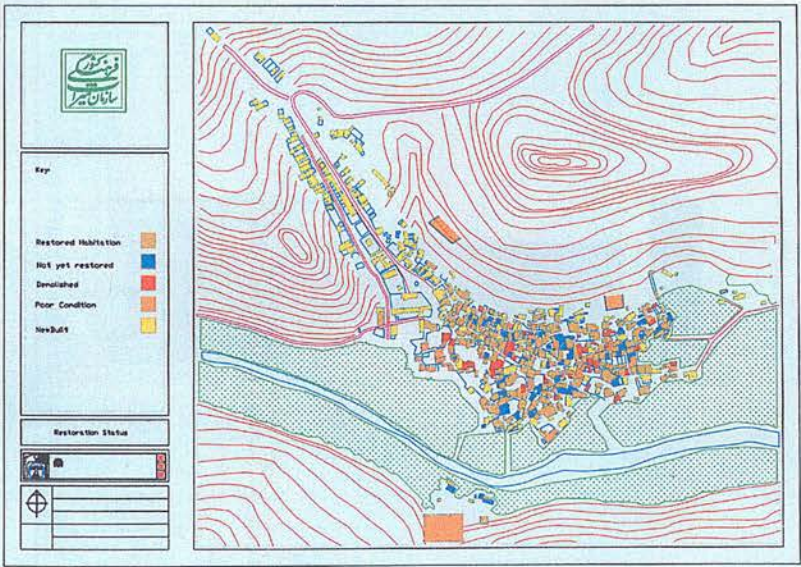
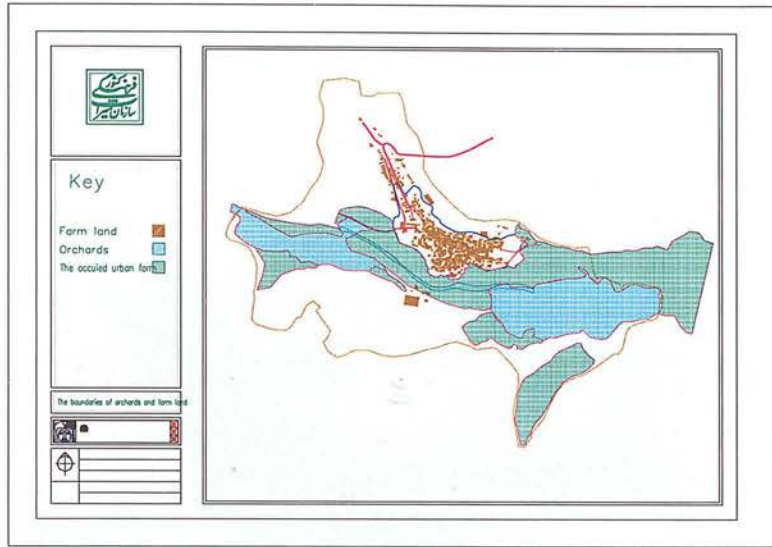
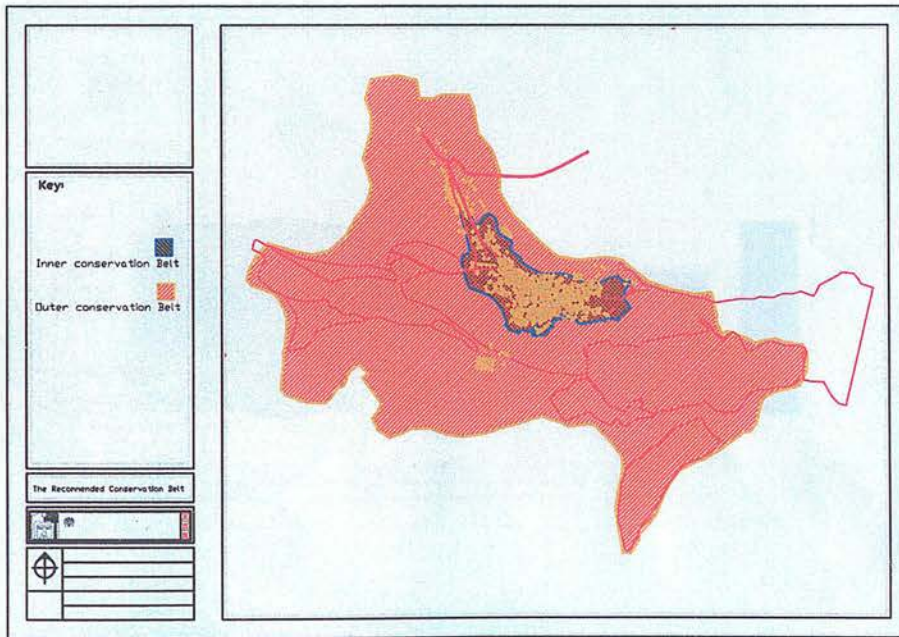


Figure 345: A full condition survey of dwellings and their state of repair





**Figure 346: Prevention of ingress of over all zoning of the settlement, farm and orchard to build up areas, in relation to the green belt proposed by the researcher.**



**Figure 347: The researchers proposed and accepted inner and outer conservation belt, now part of legislation and law of preservation of Abianeh by the National Heritage Agency of Islamic republic of Iran.**



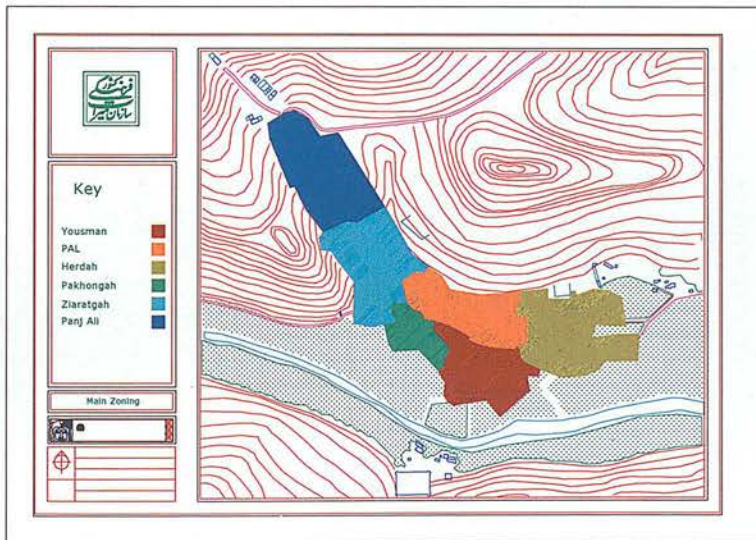
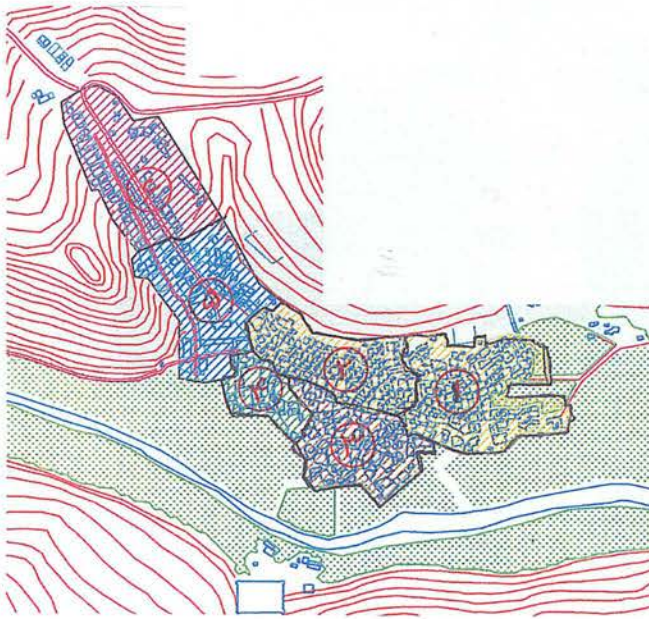


Figure 348: Preservation of regional boundaries with in the historic settlements and its clear Plano metric segregation.

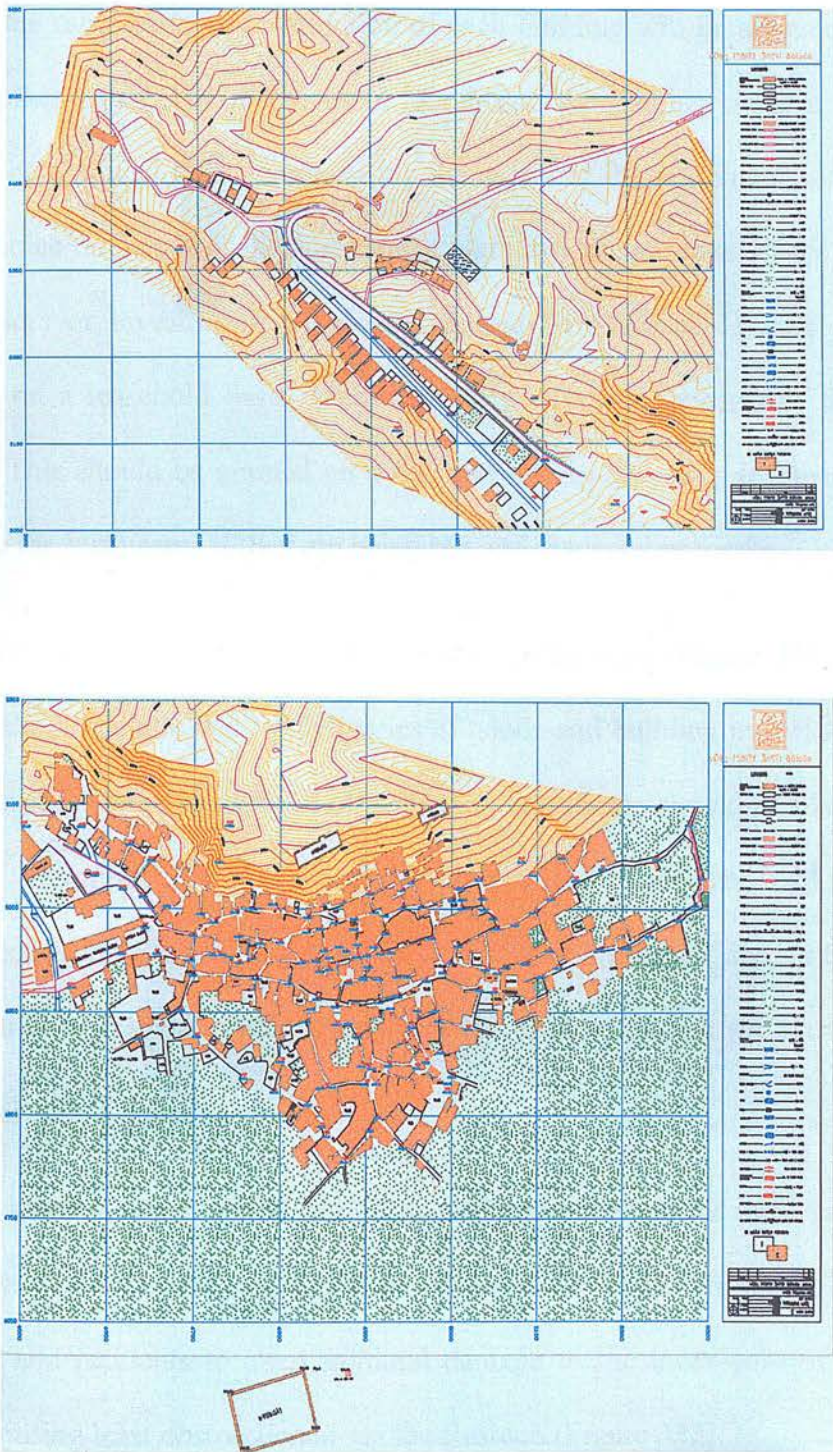


Figure 349: The Instigation of the first Ordinate survey map of the settlement to enable future changes and its monitoring, paid and completed by the national heritage of Iran.



Thus, the renovation and restoration of each building will be allocated within every development plan. The resources of labour and the running costs of these premises should be obtained through consulting the elders of the settlement and by respecting their choice on behalf of the community. Similarly the approval of the new tenants or proprietors or investors or developers should be obtained. Houses must be let or bought on a leasehold basis, renewable only with the approval of the settlement's elders. This should be granted on a fair and reasonable basis, in other words, not to damage the businesses if they are being run and managed properly.

2. All internal routes should be dedicated to pedestrians (Figure 344), while limited access should be allowed for deliveries of goods and building materials only (Figure: 343) Permission for access and all necessary assurances should be obtained from the elders' committee. Facilities for commercial and residents' parking should be developed outside the main gate to the west of the settlement and on the east side, in accordance with the allocated areas identified by this research and recorded on record drawings.

3. Two squares, one at either end of the settlement beyond the main gates on the east and west, should be created immediately outside the conservation belt. This will allow visitors and residents to exert minimal damage to the inner core of the settlement while causing least obstruction along the Rashteh (Figure 342).

4. The use of key riverside paths and diagonal routes through the settlement as well as the Rashteh, the main route through the settlement, should be clearly identified to the public and emphasised for main access to the settlement. This will facilitate access to



most areas of the settlement without undue disturbing of the infrastructure. As the entire settlement is open on all sides, this will create an outer belt to the south hidden beyond the orchards and mostly out of sight. By joining the two new parking areas from west to the east, this will facilitate a new commercial route on the outside of the settlement with reasonable access to any zone within the settlement through the secondary routes. This will ensure the integrity of the proposed route and create less pollution and disturbance for the normal life-style and social interaction throughout the settlement (Figure 343).

5. Two camping areas to the west and east of the settlement should be created to accommodate tourism in greater numbers, with the benefit of enjoying the phenomenon of Abianeh and its superb natural setting. Public facilities and amenities should allow for sanitation to serve the public at large. A fee should be charged by the village elders for the use of land and public facilities. This will ease the burden of costs for maintaining these areas and will contribute to renovating the communal spaces of the settlement, including all garden walls, and can be structured to assist the less wealthy or incapacitated members of the community (Figure 342).

6. The settlement should have a toll charged on entry for families and individuals visiting the settlement. This charge should be deposited in an account allocated for maintaining the housing stock of the conservation (historical belt) and be also used to help the less capable members of the community. This will assist in maintaining a reasonable standard of sanitation and structural integrity to their settlement and, in some cases, contribute towards the costs related to funerals, mosques and ceremonies. There should be no outsiders intervening in this process. The administrator should be a salaried representative of the community elected every two years, and should be

allowed an assistant for bookkeeping and accountability purposes, a time honoured model. This respects the communal laws of Abianeh which have accumulated over one thousand years of cultural development, as noted above.

### **7.2. Examination of the Condition of the Settlement**

Work which has taken place within the settlement in recent years can be understood as comprising the following:

1. In the areas adjoining the settlement in recent years there has been a rapid growth of "Tehran-style" of housing characterised by an alien architecture and detailing that totally disregards the local character and style of indigenous dwellings while overshadowing the continuity of the urban fabric at all levels. This demonstrates either ignorance or a lack of respect and neglect of the values of the existing principles inherent in the settlement's identity.

This 'invasion' has penetrated through to the inner conservation belt of the settlement, initially in its details, by the gradual replacement of individual elements such as doors, and windows, before more seriously expanding to embrace an entire facade of the dwelling, or the building itself.

2. Collectively this results in a nightmare scenario - a collage of old and new - demonstrating the fractured integrity and continuity of the traditional building types and their 'straight jacketed' pure edged, rectangular buildings, each embodying no particular sense of purpose or direction. The wilful application of modernity and the use of new appliances to compensate for the climatic rationale, dictate that buildings

no longer need to be facing any direction. Consequently the memory behind the form is displaced and the identifiable historic elements are now lost amongst the bland and the faceless, devoid of any particular meaning. The doors that once carried the history of the inhabitants and comprised a local registration document for their owners, have been converted to steel sheets of 8mm gauge in factory sizes which no longer relate to the overall standards previously used. The soft edges of the roof lines are replaced by sharp edges of brickwork and steel or reinforced concrete, without any interpretation of adoption of the general detailing, in order to harmonise the new with the traditional. The problems associated with the introduction of parapet walls, and forming roof gutters while introducing new details, are hard to resolve and invariably lead to trapped water and the inevitable increase in maintenance problems.

3. In some cases, with the advent of corrugated sheets and asphalted roofs, the entire concept of the roof and its falls and construction has been changed to such an extent which lends itself to the appearance of a factory unit rather than a dwelling.

Intervention therefore is necessary to eliminate the spillage of this 'contamination' into the main historical core.

### **7.3.                   Proposals for Renovation and Restoration**

To establish and define the conservation belts of Abianeh is a crucial first step in commencing a revitalisation programme.

With the support of the National Heritage Agency of Iran, its regional bureau and the minister in charge, detailed analyses were carried out concerning the urban areas and the various grounds associated with the settlement. A set of drawings and provisional



recommendations referring to the establishing of the conservation zone were prepared.

The "National Heritage Agency is the sole statutory supervising body which administers any such building regulations, planning and development controls. In this context it is absolutely necessary to accept a fundamental principle in such a process: Abianeh is not a settlement in need of "change", it is a settlement in need of "protection". It is an historical marvel, an example of a unique developed culture and it is an urban habitat in danger of extinction.

As the research progressed, it became rather obvious that any 'standard' restoration programme that several officials previously had in mind would have no control over the settlement's overall Plano metric syntax or, say, its fenestration, or ultimately the details of important historical building types, which are key components and unique to the settlement.

A summary of these faults outlines what is actually taking place:-

There is a tendency to 'overdo' the façade by making it more elaborate and stylish than it needs be. Typically this is the result of bringing in eclectic elements of different periods and cultures.

There is a basic lack of understanding of the value of the existing architecture, its integrity, purity of style and typologies.

There is a lack of care and attention to detailing based on the traditional methods of construction, while reverting to easier more readily available 'solutions' and materials.

There is an absence of attention to urban continuity and its supervision.

There has been no mechanism in place to address the difficulties in promoting the traditional skills and crafts associated with the restoration, maintenance and costs of the dwellings.

This proposal should be expanded by the authorities and carefully documented, with the express purpose of remedying the variations and deviations from the original styles:

1. All dwellings with typological deviations within the inner belt of the settlement, viz., "Ones which are new and Daroongara (internal looking)"<sup>1</sup>, This exercise will be expensive and may be replaced by giving such buildings a 'face lift', in order to conform with the development of a new law of neighbourhood design.<sup>2</sup>
2. All existing brick facades should be covered with expanded metal lathing and rendered in the traditional material of "Kahgel", mud reinforced hay, to blend in the new with the old and to allow visual continuity of the skyline and forms. This exercise is relatively easy and a most effective way of combating the recently constructed dwellings yet does not have a conflict with the building as a whole.

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<sup>1</sup> The totality of Abianeh lies in the type of Biroongara, "External looking with no internal courtyard".

<sup>2</sup> The researcher promotes a new concept of design assigned to historical heterotypic design of settlements which have been realised through a long time. This principle of design is called "The Neighbourhood concept" which basis itself on the conditions of site, party walls and boundaries, skyline, building materials consistent with the ascendancy of the general building types in the region, the climatic influence of the region, the cultural imprint and the relationship of the total form to content, and association with the society and neighbourhood. This forms collectively a brief which would be unique to every historic settlement of this type. The brief is generated through needs associated with culture, economy, work, and use to content

3. Parapets and other roof elements, which are contrary to the overall character and the forms of the dwellings, should be removed. However this is not always practical for the new buildings because the parapet may have a structural role as well. However it is an element which must be prohibited from any further use in the inner core of the settlement.

4. Alien examples of fenestration, wrongly sized and proportioned doors and windows, and the use of steel doors and windows at all levels should be prohibited. Any existing ones should be changed gradually, with new timber items installed to match the existing. In the case of new infill buildings, there should be strict controls over the use of such materials in the inner core. The styles, forms and numbers of windows and doors must be kept within the same rhythm as the existing.

### **7.4. Conservation Belt**

Regulatory details or regulations related to protection of the proposed inner conservation belt should incorporate the following controls (Figure 352).

1. Any attempt to renovate, extend, reduce, change the use, alter the building form or external works, roads or any other work which materially affects the building form as a whole - must be carried out with a full planning permission issued through the National Heritage Agency and administered by all concerned statutory authorities in the following manner:

a. The finishes must comply with adjoining buildings in the neighbourhood and must be hand finished in the traditional manner (Figure 349).



b. There should be strict controls in the application of any foreign materials inconsistent with that of the settlement as a whole.

c. There should be a consistent use of red ash and red clay, and local timber for restoration work. Materials should be correctly treated and made free of any sap, then weathered and seasoned suitable for traditional methods of use.

d. Windows at basements and ground floors should be in proportion with the forms and dimensions of the existing fenestration. Authentic timber to match existing timber will be used. The National Heritage Agency will publish accurate specifications and guidelines.

2. It is of crucial importance for the protection of the historical core of Abianeh that, as much as it is possible, the ruins and damaged properties, or gap sites along the “Rashteh” the main spinal route through the settlement, are adapted to house the required new development. As exemplars of construction and design these buildings must be erected with strict conformity to the rules, hence enhance the skyline and continuity of the existing traditional fabric. A full submission of drawings, details and specification must be made to the National Heritage Agency for overseeing, approval and supervision purposes (Figure 342).

3. Consequently it is of importance that the buildings needing repair are categorised and listed as follows (Figure 348):-

a. Minor repairs and renovation,

b. Major repairs and renovation

c. Condemned / Subject to notification laws outlined below by demolishing or

making safe the property – counter-charge the property owners and salvage the timber work and other remains usable for later renovations (Figure 351).

d. Free land or gap sites:

e. Land in need of Development

f. Land to be restricted from building upon.

4. Properties are to be listed and their ownership title clearly identified. A notice is to be served on each owner giving details of the property they own and the limitations and requirements to be placed. Such owners are to be given a three stage 'Notice to Comply' with the Requirements of the National Heritage Agency.

a. Stage one: The ownership certification and any additional proof are to be requested, as confirmed by the village elders. If there is a dispute, it is to be referred to the legal governmental representative of the village and the village elders, in order to establish clear title of ownership by law.

b. Stage two: The status of the owners and whether they wish to comply with the requirements of the National Heritage Agency should be established. If compliance is agreed, then National Heritage Agency is to supply the overall specification and approved plan to the owners who are to be given adequate time to comply with these documents.

c. If the owners do not comply or refuse to maintain such a property or properties then the following must be established -

Will they sell the property?

Will they pass ownership to other residents or temporary residents of Abianeh?

Serving notice of position within three stages of - two weeks, one month and six months.

If no reply is received within six months the property is to be possessed by the village elders, held in trust and developed. It is to be used to benefit the settlement and its inhabitants. If the original owner wishes to have the property returned with good title, such a person will be entitled subject to full payment of the restoration and ancillary costs enabling the works. As a general rule, these costs should not exceed the value of the property. However even in such a case, the original owner may relinquish all rights to ever owning the property unless the full payment is made, through the National Heritage Agency and certified by the representative of the settlement on behalf the village elders.

5. The rules and regulation for the outer zone of the settlement should be clearly established. Essentially all new applications or those for renovation, restoration or rebuilding, part or whole of a building or buildings is not permitted unless with the application and compliance of the following rules (Figure 352):-

a. Through whatever actions, as a result of which a dwelling or the natural surroundings of the settlement sustains damage such as the cutting down of trees, any earthworks or removal, excavation of any kind, conversions of orchards or agricultural fields, changes of route of springs, tampering with or altering the natural flow of, or contamination of, the water supply – all are strictly forbidden in the defined area, unless with strict planning permission and the consent of the local elders and/or their representatives.



- b. The use of natural materials obtained from this area or its surroundings is to be with the strict permission of the National Heritage Agency only and only if such materials are to be used for renovation and restoration purposes. (The routes and the resources belong to the people of Abianeh, and consequently it is their correct usage which is being monitored).
- c. No changes to the natural surrounding paths and routes are allowed regardless of ownership.
- d. Any construction temporarily affecting roads, repairs to roads, building, planting trees, must be approved by the National Heritage Agency and the village elders.
- e. The removal and exporting of any building material, stones or any part or organs of the existing buildings is expressly forbidden. To do so should be punishable by law with the consequence of fines and/or imprisonment and charges. (The content of the settlement should be classified as antiquities and under the protection of the government of Iran through the National Heritage Agency and the owners of the houses as custodians).
- f. The buildings which have already been erected should be served a notice with suggestions from the National Heritage Agency as to how they can comply with a 'face-lift' programme to bring some of them which are within the inner and outer belt up to a tolerable standard. In other words an attempt should be made to harmonise their dwelling in keeping with the aesthetics of the settlement. Elements such as windows, doors, roofs and finishes on the façade, will receive close scrutiny in this regard.

g. No changes to the existing historical fabric, especially windows, doors, and their dimensions, are to be allowed at all.

h. For all building activities that change or rearrange an existing dwelling or new, then an application must be made in full to the National Heritage Agency for planning permission, a condition of which will be their direct supervision.

Note: The inner belt does not allow for any change to the existing building types at all. They can only be repaired and restored to their original condition with the aid of National Heritage Agency and the elders of the settlement. "Forming restoration work only".

The outer belt does not allow any new or restoration work without a full planning application to the National Heritage Agency. However new buildings will be permitted, subject to their location and compliance with the overall building regulations and approval of the elders and village representatives.

Any monument or communal building within the outer belt is subject to the same procedures for the inner belt. These may include such as Ziaratgah of Hinza, the mills, mosques and orchards and their garden walls and gateways.

National Heritage Agency must not at any time carry out any work without the full consent and agreement of the village elders. If a dispute arises, it is to be solved by the representative of both parties. If no agreement can be reached then the matter can be referred to arbitration under the legal officer appointed by the courts, whose word will be final.

Note must also be taken that for this scheme to succeed it must at all times incorporate

local labour and skills and the opinion of the people resident in the settlement.

### 7.5. Guidance

1) It is hereby recommended that the National Heritage Agency of Kashan, under instruction from the head office in Teheran, within two months of acceptance and approval, adopt the proposal for the inner and the outer preservation belts of Abianeh herewith proposed. The National Heritage Agency of Kashan will serve a written notice to the occupants of Abianeh to action the preservation and maintenance of their owned buildings and notify the relevant authorities and local and regional representatives to monitor the same.

If no reply is obtained a notice board is to be erected in each section of the settlement giving notice to the occupants. On completion of the notice date if no response is obtained the National Heritage Agency is to advertise in all national newspapers in three different equal 30 days notices. If by then no reply is received, action should be initiated for taking into possession the site in question.

The property will thereupon effectively become a National Heritage Agency owned property. If the owner should appear at any time after, the building or the property should be returned to them subject to complete repayment of all costs, charges and fines set by the National Heritage Agency. It should be noted that the profits generated from any property, or finance generated through any position, must be redirected to the settlement and spent on the settlement's overall restoration programme in accordance with the National Heritage Agency and the appointed representatives of the settlement.



2) The restoration building programme recommended above, is to be operated by at least by one architectural technician who should be employed by the National Heritage Agency and be stationed in Abianeh during the months of spring and summer and part of the winter season at least two days a week in order to assist the local residents with their enquiries.

### **7.6. Final Recommendations**

Because of the complexity of the overall exercise and that some of the actions will require time to establish their finalised procedures, the following recommendations are made:-

1. Notwithstanding the central government, regional authorities and municipality planning procedures in Iran. The National Heritage Agency is herewith charged with the duty of compiling a specific building regulation based on the typology of buildings and the standardisation of the most important features and characteristics of the settlement. Each building type must have a complete record set of 'as built' drawings and an archive of the same documents should be established in the technical office at Abianeh while a permanent reserve copy set should be retained at the National Heritage Agency in Kashan. The archive will be consulted by the locals and the supervising officers as used as guidelines and a reference as to the approved examples and standards that must be applied.

2. A report and full study should be undertaken on the housing interiors in the inner conservation belt of Abianeh. Specific consideration should be given to the most ornate and, specifically, the typologically unique and correct buildings, such as the various Chahar-Sofeh dwellings. The preservation of the inner belt must

acknowledge and incorporate all internal finishes and decorations, frescos, and inherent design characteristics outlined in this research as unique. This must incorporate designs and artefacts considered superstitions and deviations from Islamic or other nationally practiced beliefs.

3. The National Heritage Agency should compile a report on the structure of ownership of lands, gardens, orchards and agricultural lands associated with the ownership of the properties and residences of Abianeh. The application of the law should be extended to these elements also, as they all contribute to the greater picture of understanding of one society and its culture. To help issues concerning sustainability, this exercise becomes crucial when the planting season begins and water distribution and internal traditional distribution of resources may become contentious or cause conflicts of interest. A complete schedule of this category of ownership should also be retained at the technical offices in Abianeh and Kashan for reference by the representatives of the law, architects, planners, owners, occupiers, and officers of National Heritage Agency, students and so on.

During the seven years of this research, sadly, there has been evidence of ongoing destruction, poor maintenance and restoration, all carried out without due care and attention from the National Heritage Agency in terms of guidance or instructions given on site. It is recommended that all works should be ceased in the inner belt until the relevant research and essential documentation are established.

The current development of some existing residential buildings and the newly built houses outside the inner belt should not be interpreted or confused with the notion that the settlement is being revitalised or that these new buildings have little if any effect

on the settlement at all. The ingress of people and their activities in this settlement must not be allowed to cloud professional judgement. The records hereby presented declare and articulate a strong case and it is hoped that the recommendations will be adopted and implemented in the years ahead.

### **Technical Committee Set-up:**

The National heritage should set up an approved selected representative of the village elders and their technical supervisors and inspectors to meet and run regular meetings addressing the issues rose on a monthly base, to resolve differences and process the planning procedures as demonstrated by the researcher Figure 357.



**Figure 350:** The proposal for the Technical committee comprising of the elders of the



settlement, live demonstration of workshops set us specifically to transfer the know how to the endogenous people of the settlement.

Historical settlements cannot be created, nor can they be designed by one generation. To attempt the creation of a city or town from what was nothing, in the image of one that has been in existence for hundreds of years, is an exercise in mimicry, resulting in at best a copy or a mask. To be considered historical, a settlement must experience natural growth and evolutionary development throughout the ages. This cannot be achieved from an instant brief. It is a result of a series of realistic needs and associations created culturally, historically, climatically and artistically. Indeed it is the totalities of all these elements which gives the place an aura, an understanding and a sense that all components are correct and truly belong. The result is a feeling of unique, uncompromising stability and harmony consistent with the *genius loci*. It is a challenge which has haunted architects and town planners for centuries.

The progress of the researcher's interest in finding the detail about how this settlement came together as one body, and then functioned under various historical and factual events, gave rise to an understanding which until recently proved elusive. The revelation that followed detail study of the historical, climatic, geographical, anthropological, and cultural development - which in turn preceded an appraisal of the architectural specificity, the identity of the place, and statistical analyses of the settlement and the people as a whole - is consistent with recognizing a set of phenomena peculiar to Abianeh. These collectively form a genetic chain of events which through the ages has shaped the place and its people into what they are today.

The proposal of the researcher is concerned with identifying the only

viable way to revitalize a living historical settlement. By identifying the parameters of its existence from inception through to the present day, only then can one truly add or remove an element of the settlement, be it people or dwellings. It is through detail analyses and realization of the 'truth' about a settlement that one begins to understand its essential character and the reasons behind its particular evolution. For any future plan, it is essential to develop an adequate reservoir of information and knowledge before attempting a valid solution to a problem, which at first sight seems confusing and impossible.

The researcher recommends that Abianeh can be saved only if the settlement's essential elements and characteristics, as set out in this study, are acknowledged, are adhered to and that the indigenous people are allowed to play a much stronger role in their future than regional and central government are currently allowing. It is recommended that the detail findings of this research be distributed to the National Heritage Agency in Kashan and Isfahan in order to further their expertise and knowledge concerning the way they have been restoring the settlement. This will allow them to correctly approach the problems of how to arrest the decline and how to phase the restoration of the settlement. Consequently, to be viable and valid, revitalization must also acknowledge the commercial aspects of the settlement as set out in the research. These issues should be taken up seriously and recommendations suggested implemented. To its great credit, the National Heritage Agency has established the conservation belt recommended by the researcher for Abianeh as presented in this study. This has now been upheld by the conservation laws of the Islamic Republic of Iran.

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## **The Glossary of Terms**

## Glossary of Terms

Ahang: the cover of walls; a type of half domed roof.

Akhor: the stables or the place where livestock or their feed is kept within the dwellings.

Aliqapoo: the palace of Shah Abbas the Great; the most prominent feature of the main square of Nagshejahan in 17<sup>th</sup> century Isfahan, then the capital city of Iran.

Arpeyman: method of measurement

Balar: man-made beams used for the purposes of expanding the length of the building and resting on walls, to bear the secondary beams and loads from above.

Barinja: large window /door.

Barkia: the main entrance.

Biroongara: externally looking house type, without outer courtyard or walled gardens, opening and reacting immediately to its external spaces.

Chahar-Sofeh: a type of dwelling in Abianeh with habitable rooms in all four corners with a cruciform central hall and a roof lit atrium.

Clode Aneh: ferooz Eshraghi, Isfahan from the point of view of foreign visitors.

Dargari: a room which was located in the path of the stair off a half landing, leading to the roof area, for storage.

Daroongara: a style of architecture with internal courtyard and/or gardens. Designed to have total privacy from the outside world, and shield; by high walls the functions, which are central to the dwelling.

Dervish: a retreated person, following a simple life, living on charity and reciting religious songs and poetry.

Dollava or Dollabha: cupboards, built into the walls, flush with the wall surface.

Esfand: the last month of the year before the New Year.

Fakhrodeen: open and filled window, a framework of brickwork with a pattern which produced 50% opening and 50% closure, hence providing privacy, light and ventilation.

Foresb: timber pieces used to cover the roof width.

Giveh: a locally made shoe, made of leather straps and woolen material.

Golmikh: a rose headed long nail with the function of a strong nail and the aesthetics of a wild flower.

Gosali: formation of land from volcanic movement of layers of earth.

Halqe: ringed knocker on the door for female caller.

Isfahan: the capital city of Iran during the Safavid dynasty.

Joob: a traditional surface water dispersal and distribution system in Iran. Widely used for irrigation and city water.

Kashan: a town about 20 km away from Abianeh on the main Silk Road.

Kazagholi : a lady of high standing who lived in Abianeh over 150 years ago and was renowned for her blue eyes. The word Kazagholi means "The Blue Eyed Lady".

Khadem: the person responsible, a curator.

Khanegah: the place where dervishes and Sufis lived and practiced Sufism.

Kolah namadi: a hat made of Namad , a kneaded woollen material

Kolombeh: a skin covering a roof, in the shape of a half-dome.

Kolpa: a shoring under a balcony or canopy above doorways.

Kond or Zageh: storage spaces under the earth for the storage of livestock or local produces.

Koof writing: a very basic Islamic writing, one of the original scripts of the holy Koran.

Korsi or Corsi:- a four legged table with a open fire charcoal grill under it and covered with a thick blanket; (the family members sat around it in winter). In this way they all were warmed to their waist and no room heating was required.

Korsi: a winter heating instrument comprising a round metal container, filled with specially made cow dung rolled into a ball shape, roughly the size of a tennis ball, and buried in ashes mixed with live burning charcoal. This is then placed in the middle of a rectangular frame some 80cm off the floor and supported on four legs. It is then covered with a large duvet cover made from substantial stuffed cotton with a patterned covering. This form of heating is still used in many parts of Iran.

(It should be noted that nowadays the heating is by mains electricity and oil



or paraffin heaters. The public baths are run by paraffin boilers or Mazoot, a form of crude oil).

Koub: a single elongated weight knocker to announce the male visitor.

Lavashak:- a sheet of dried fruit obtained by a process of mixing fruit and preparing a fluid mixture, which is then poured on to a flat area and laid to dry naturally in the sun.

Mahtabi: external balcony; a long external patio.

Manbar: a stepped high seat for delivery of the sermon and the prayers by men. A high seating or platform constructed of timber for the delivery of speeches.

Mangal: a vessel to create heat off the floor with the use of coal.

Mehmankhaneh: a guest room; the area of the house segregated from the rest and maintained to receive people outside the family.

Meymeh: a village previously noted for trading along the Silk Road.

Mirnoroosi: a new year's representative in place of Amir, the ruler.

Monabatkari: engraving on wood, resulting in indentations and projections of patterns.

Mr.Khansari: a local teacher and Scholar still resident in Abianeh.

Natanz: a city further away than Kashan which has deep trading routes with Abianeh

Nazar: the act of giving in the hope that something could come true: a wish.

Ojagh: another word for a hollow space between two rocks or hand made mounds between which wood or coal is fired and over which cooking can take place.

Orsi: sash windows, used extensively in Iran especially in the old houses of Isfahan, Kashan and Yazd provinces.

Pastoon: Storage room, a room adjacent to the sitting room which contained the household items, such as bedding, clothing, etc.

Peshkam: a kind of balcony, enclosed on three sides, or a hallway covered and opened on one side.

Rashta or Rasteh: the main route through the settlement of Abianeh, equivalent to a high street.

Reza Abbasi: the most famous painter artist to the court of the Safavied, Shah Abbas the 1st.

Sabat: archway (pend).

Sarjeh : measuring device of watering limits. 'A kind of water watch'.

Shabakeh: a geometrical framing of windows and doors constructed in timber.

Shahbazi: a game of acting as king.

Shil: sedimentary formation of rocks

Shotorkhaneh: Oshtor Khaneh, camel stables. The sleeping and resting place for camels.  
A place to feed and look after camels.

Soffe: Iwan, external room with arched opening.

Sufi: one who follows the Sufi philosophy, who follows 'the righteous path' and is one with himself and god and lives a modest but meaningful life.

Tafol: small pieces of timber, used for roof coverings, also in other parts of the building typically used for decorative reasons.

Taghcheh: window sill.

Takht: a raised platform in the shape of a rectangle, used for sleeping or sitting on.

Tanoor: a submerged hollow opening in the earth, excavated and lined with clay, fired with coal and used as an oven to bake bread.

Tavileh or Tapoola: stables, the place of keeping livestock and their feed.

Telesm: an icon made to avert evil from one's life or belongings.

Vagf: to give a proportion or alms to God for charity.

Valan or dalan: the area just outside the living space, a hallway, a sheltered space within the house, but not part of a room.

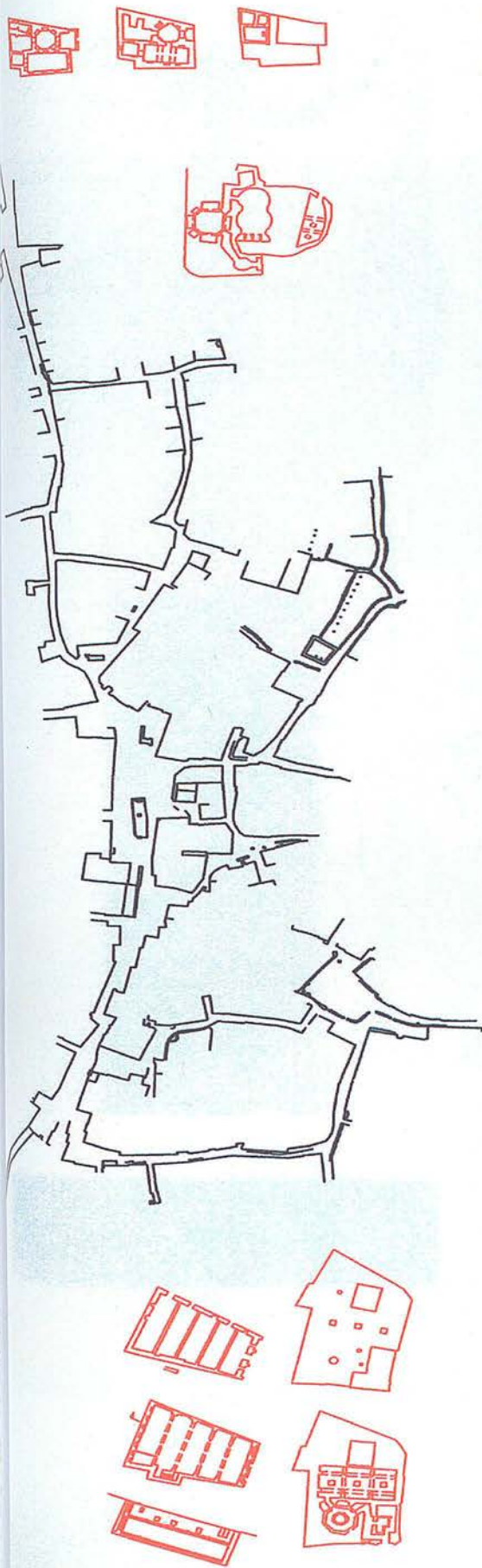
Yasin : one of the sections of the holy Koran.

Yazdi kari: the art of constructing or decorating ceilings by the subdivision of the spaces, geometrically creating a geometrical pattern with construction; a style evolved in the city of Yazed , a technique of construction and finishes developed in the Safavid period for vaulting and projected edges of vaulting and related patterns in plaster work, framing walls and ceilings.

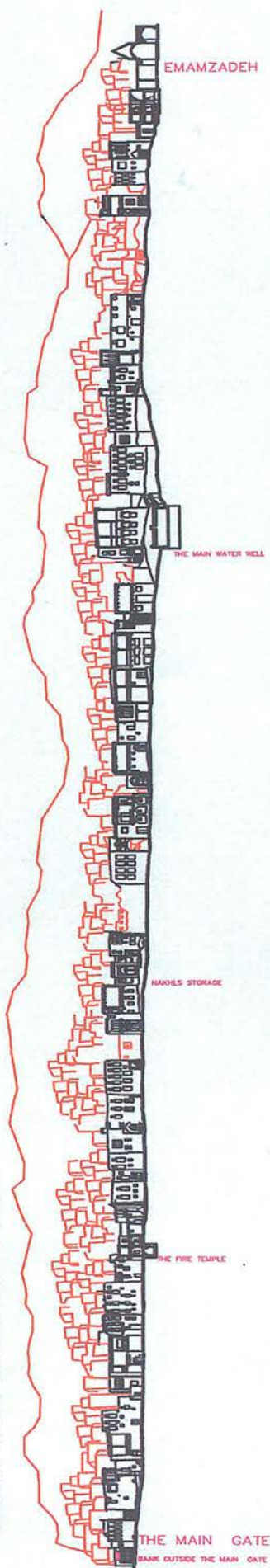
Ziag - underground storage chambers.



## **The Appendices**

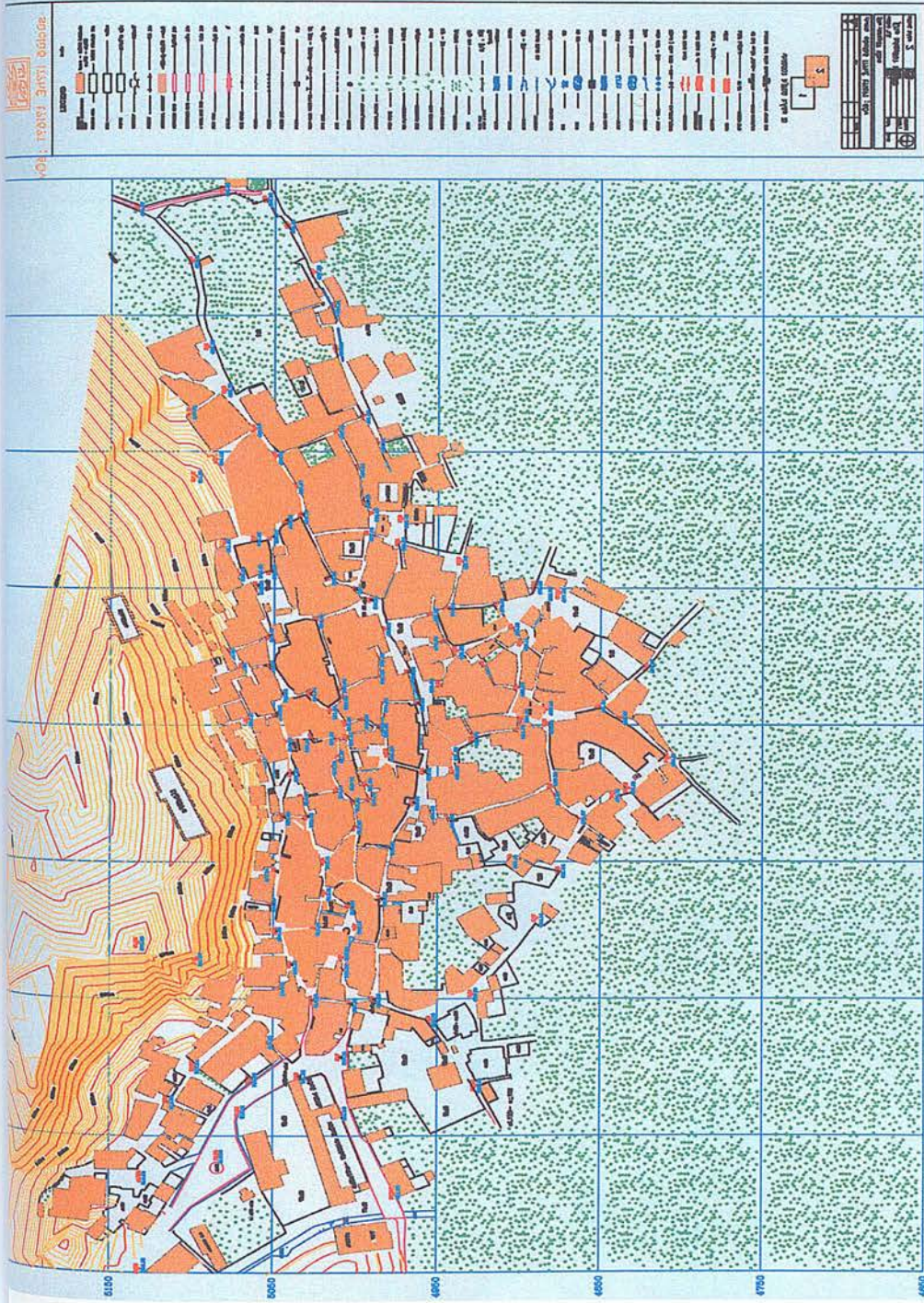


GENERAL STUDY BEGAN ON THIS PLAN BY A MR. BEN OVER 25 YEARS AGO, AS COMMISSIONED BY THE NATIONAL HERITAGE BEFORE THE REVOLUTION. THE INITIAL SURVEY WAS IN SCALES OF 1:50,1:100 AND 1:1000. COMPILES IN MENY FRAGMENTED PIECES IT TOOK THE WRITER FOUR MONTHS TO COLLECT DRAWINGS, DIGITIZE THEM AND USE COMPUTER SIMULATION TO JOIN PIECES OF THE DRAWING TOGETHER. ON MATCHING THE DRAWING AGAINST THE PERSONAL SURVEY AND THE SATELLITE IMAGERY IT PROVED TO BE EXTREMELY ACCURATE. BEN LIVED IN ABIANEH WITH HIS FAMILY FOR THE DURATION OF HIS WORK HIS WORK WAS NEVER COMPLETED UNTIL NOW.



LONGITUDINAL SECTION THROUGH RUSHTA "THE MAIN ROOT THROUGH THE SETTLEMENT" BY M.M.KASHANI

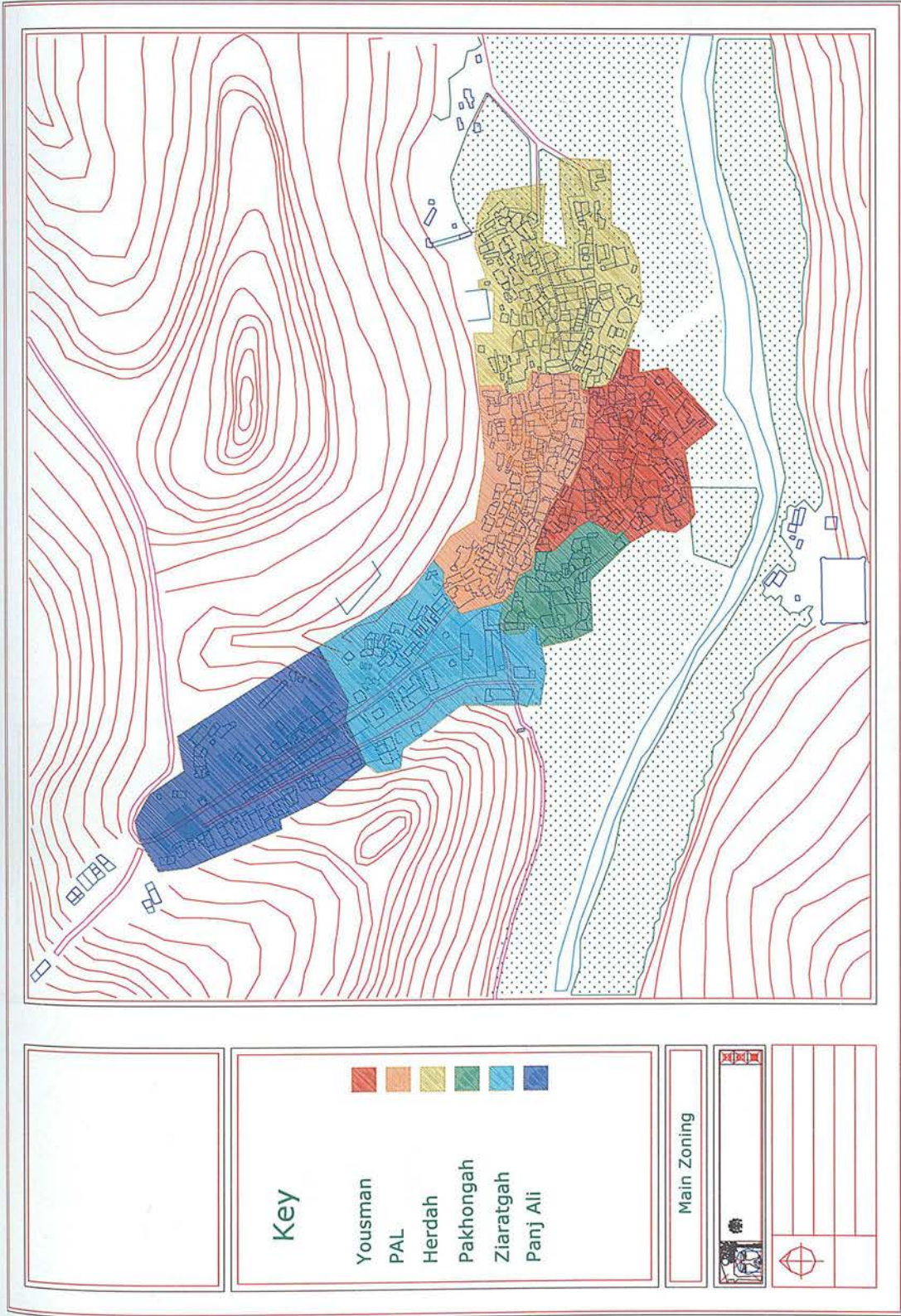


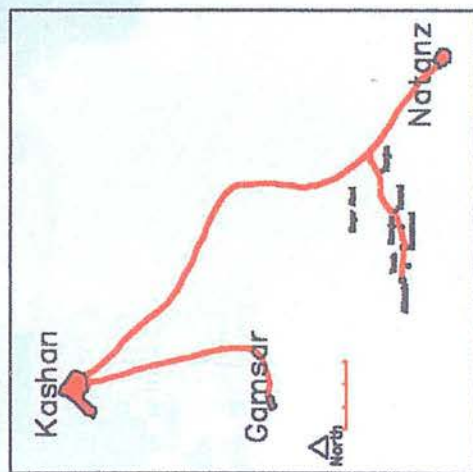
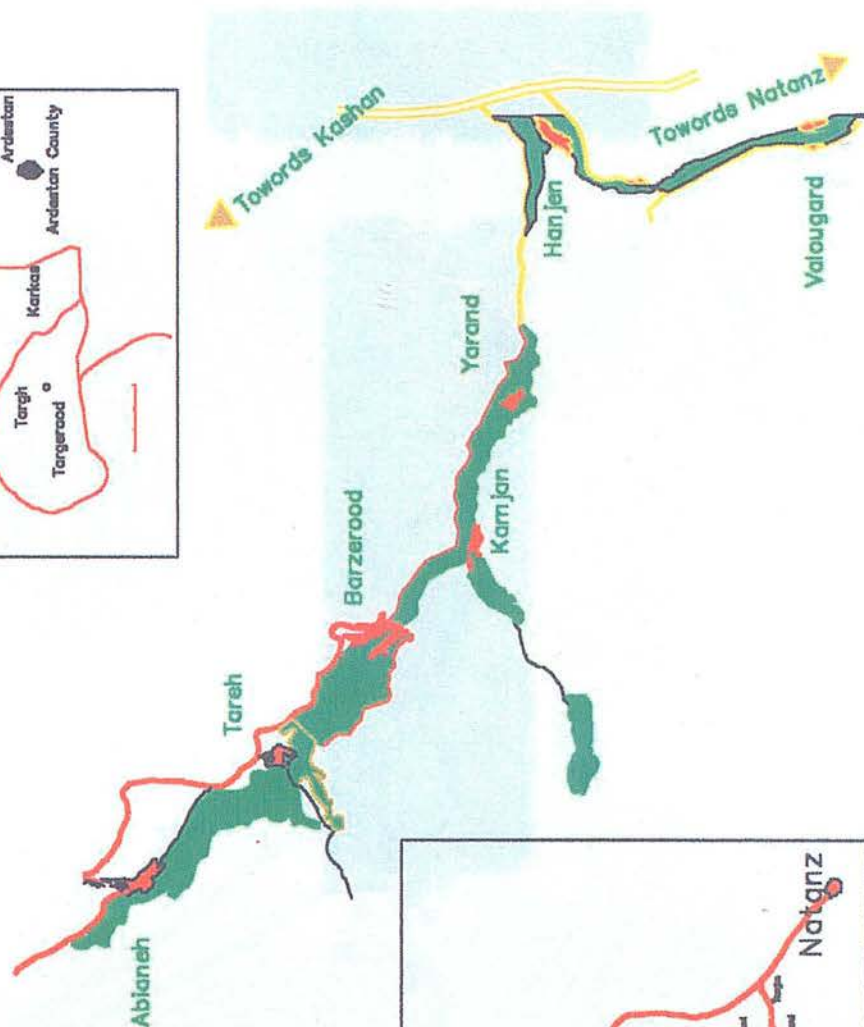
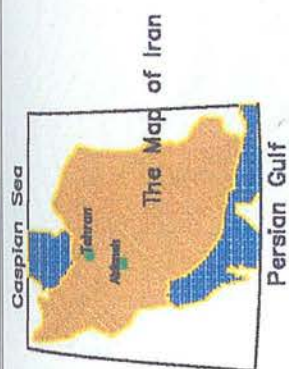






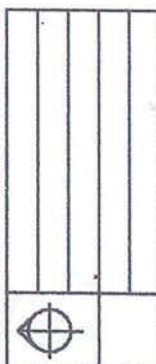




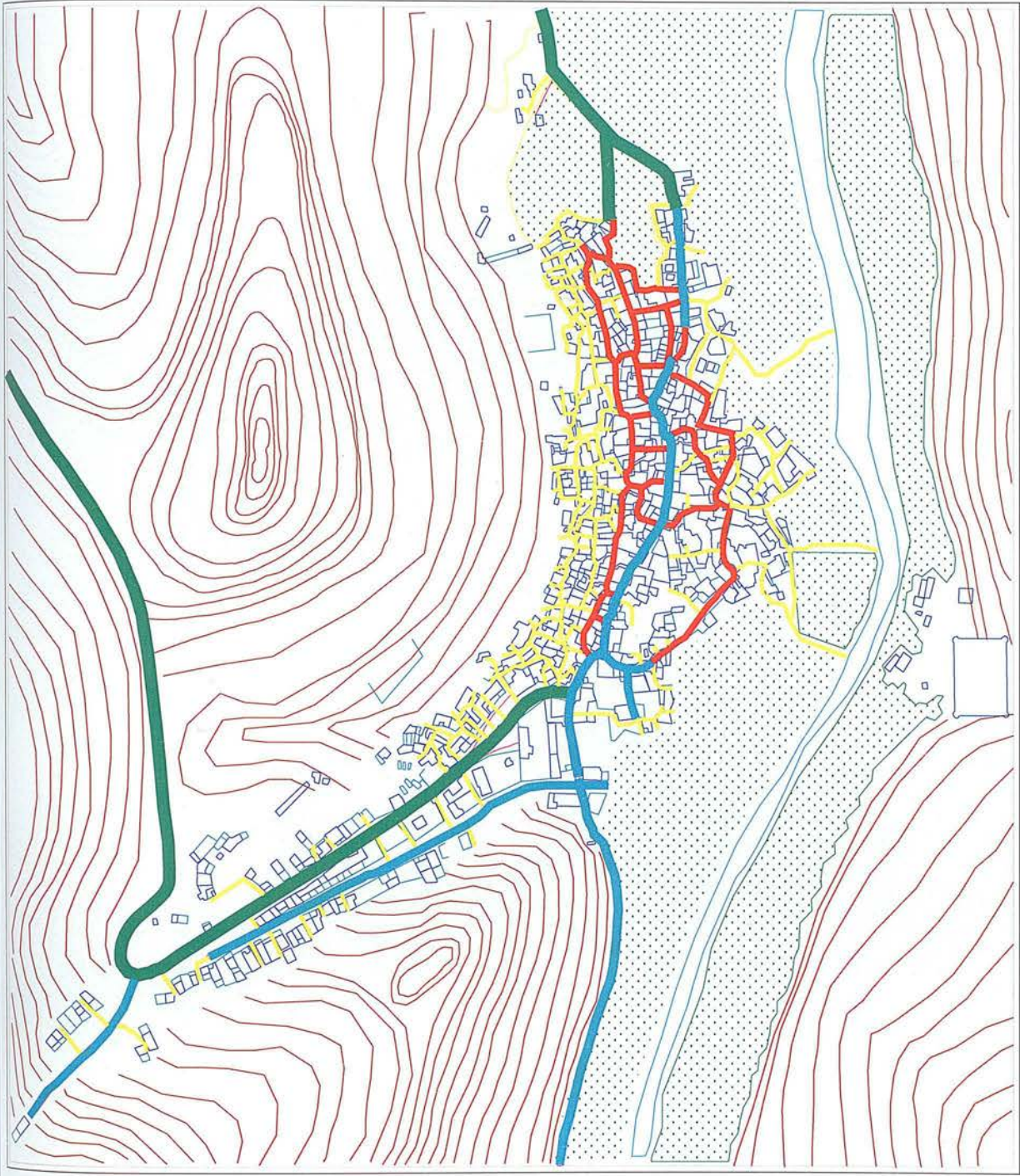


-  City
-  Setelment
-  Asfalt Rd.

Locational Guide to Abjaneh



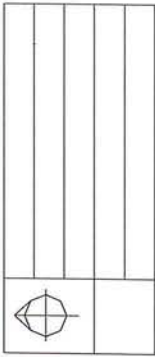




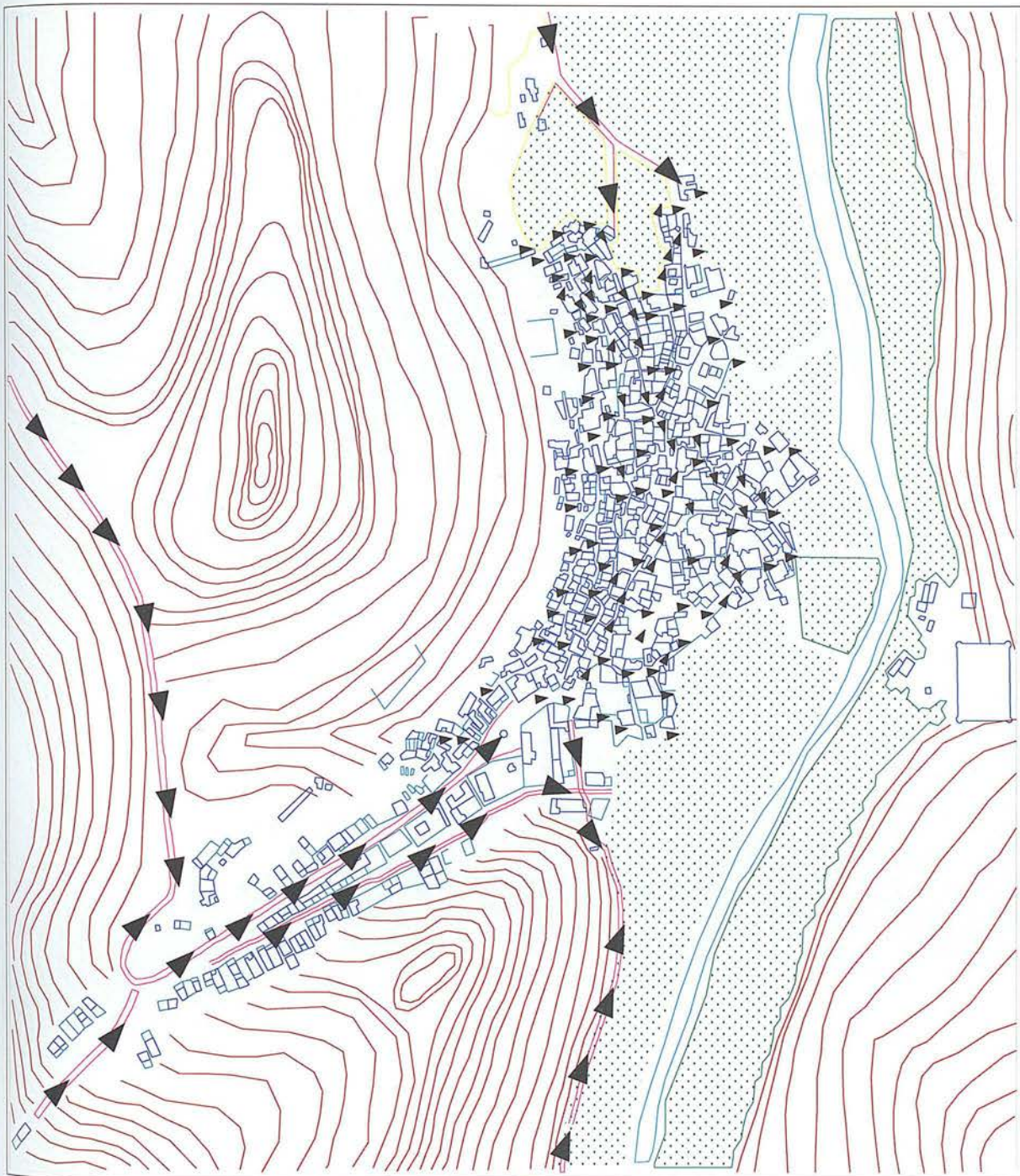
# Key

- The main approach route
- Main Route
- Secondary route
- Pedestrian lanes

Roots through the setelement







# Key



Direction of fall of  
roads and public footpath

Classification of passages



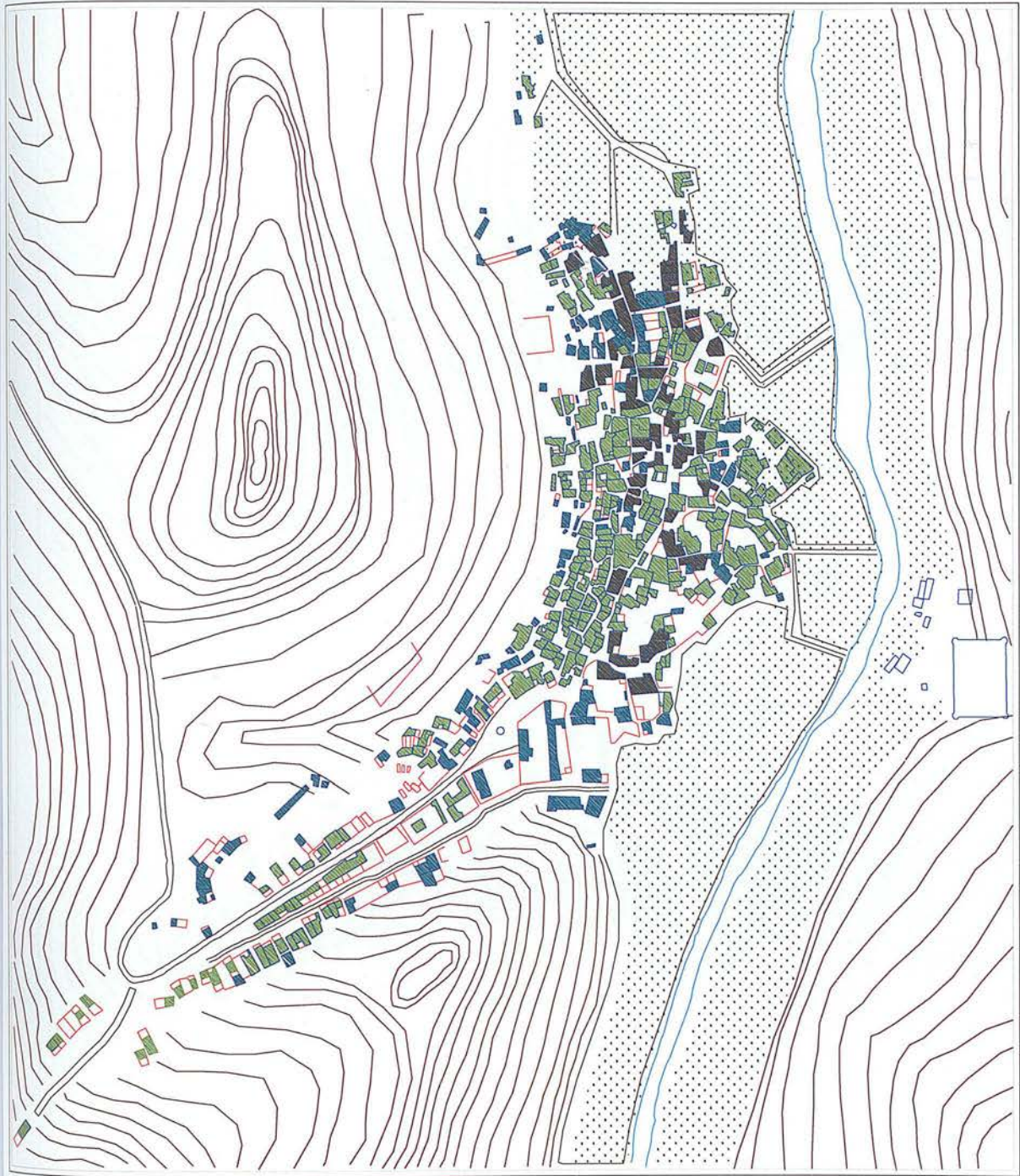
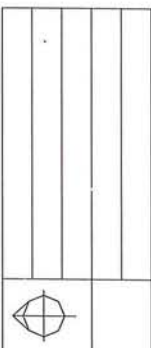




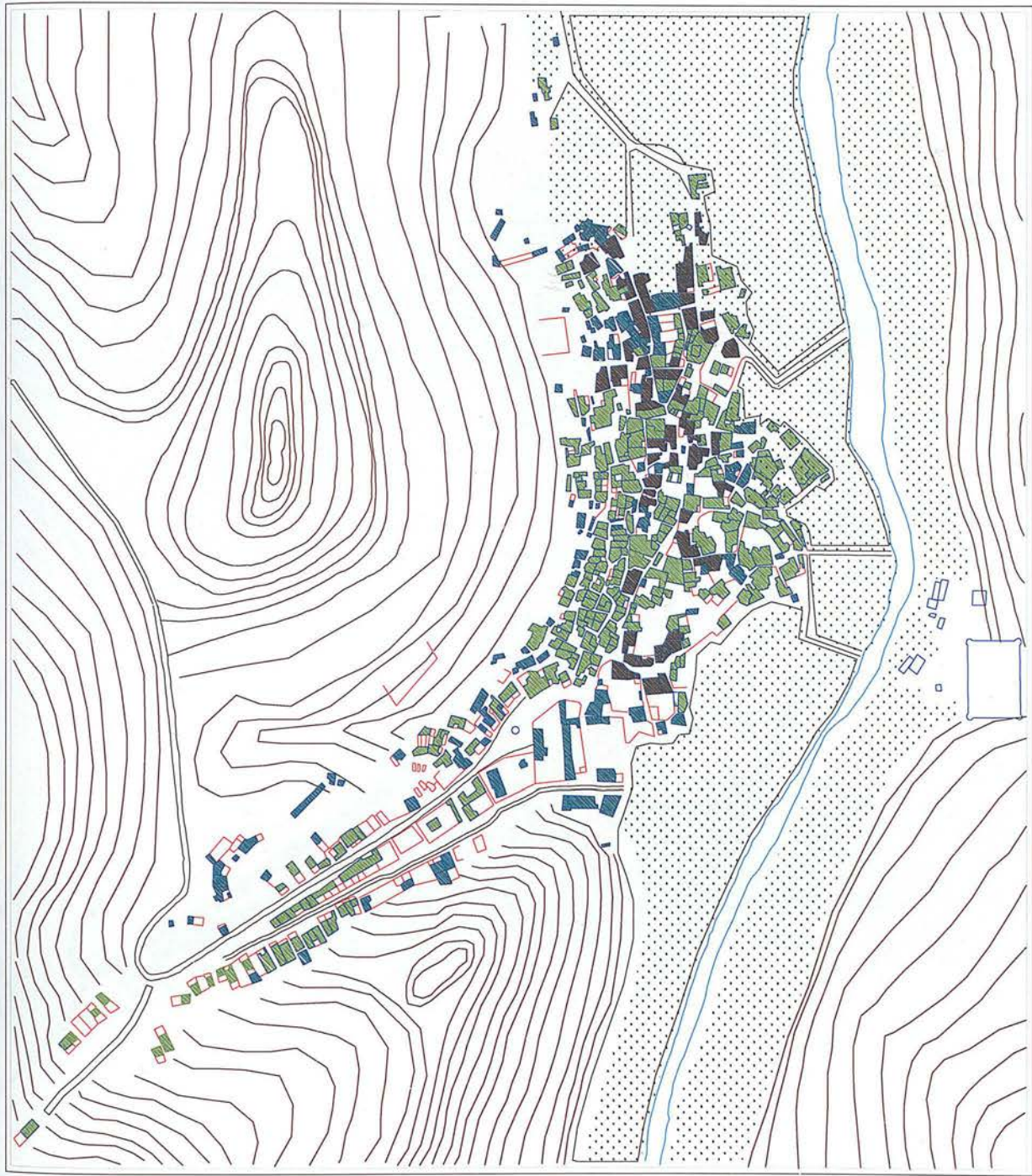
Key

- Single story
- Double story
- three story

Vertical distribution of floors



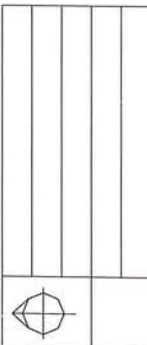




# Key

- Single story
- Double story
- three story

Vertical distribution of floors





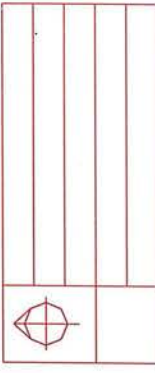
# Key

Vehicular access proposal

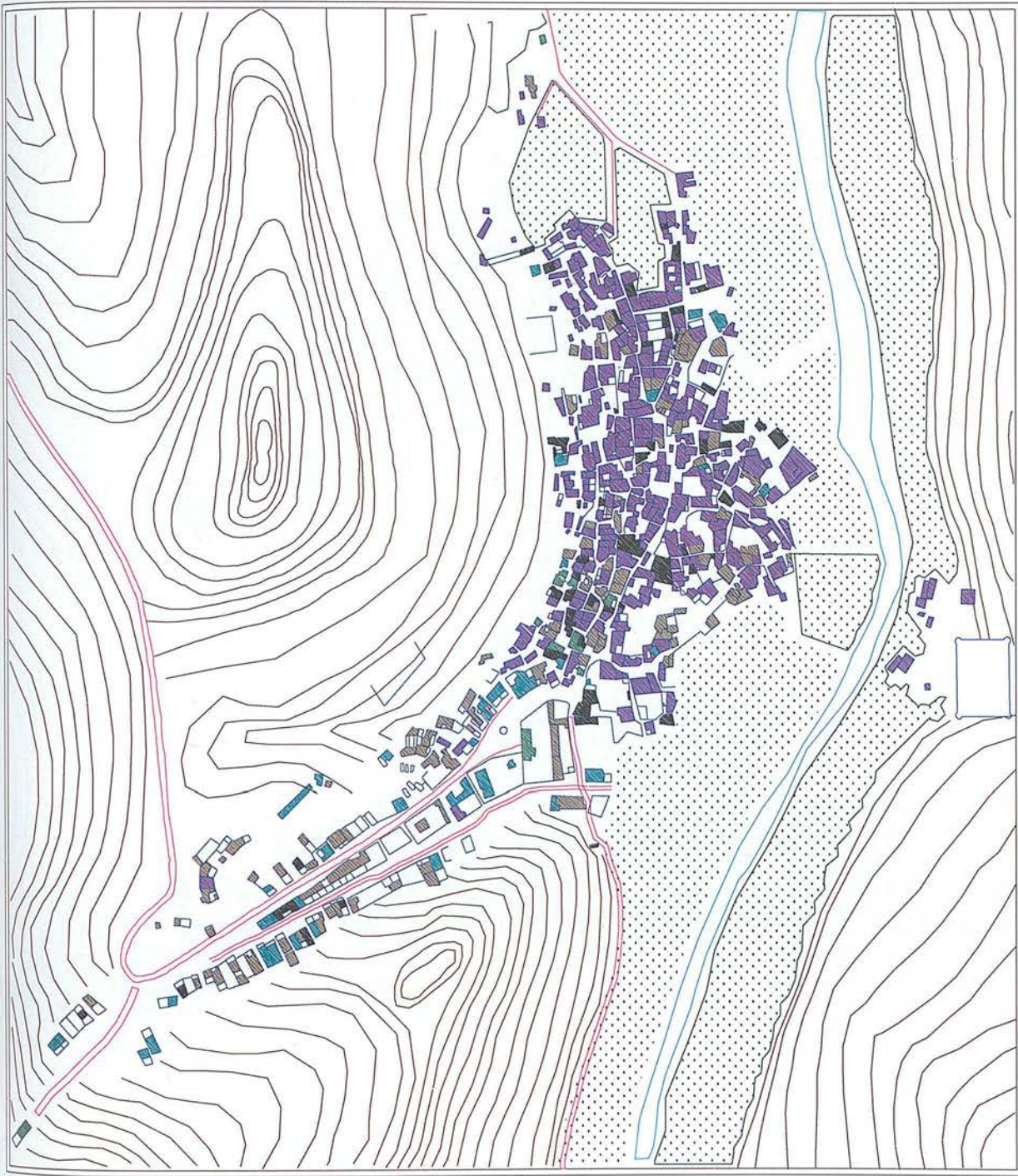
Proposal access routes

Open integratable spaces

Proposal access routes plan



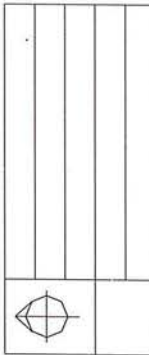
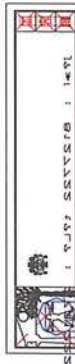




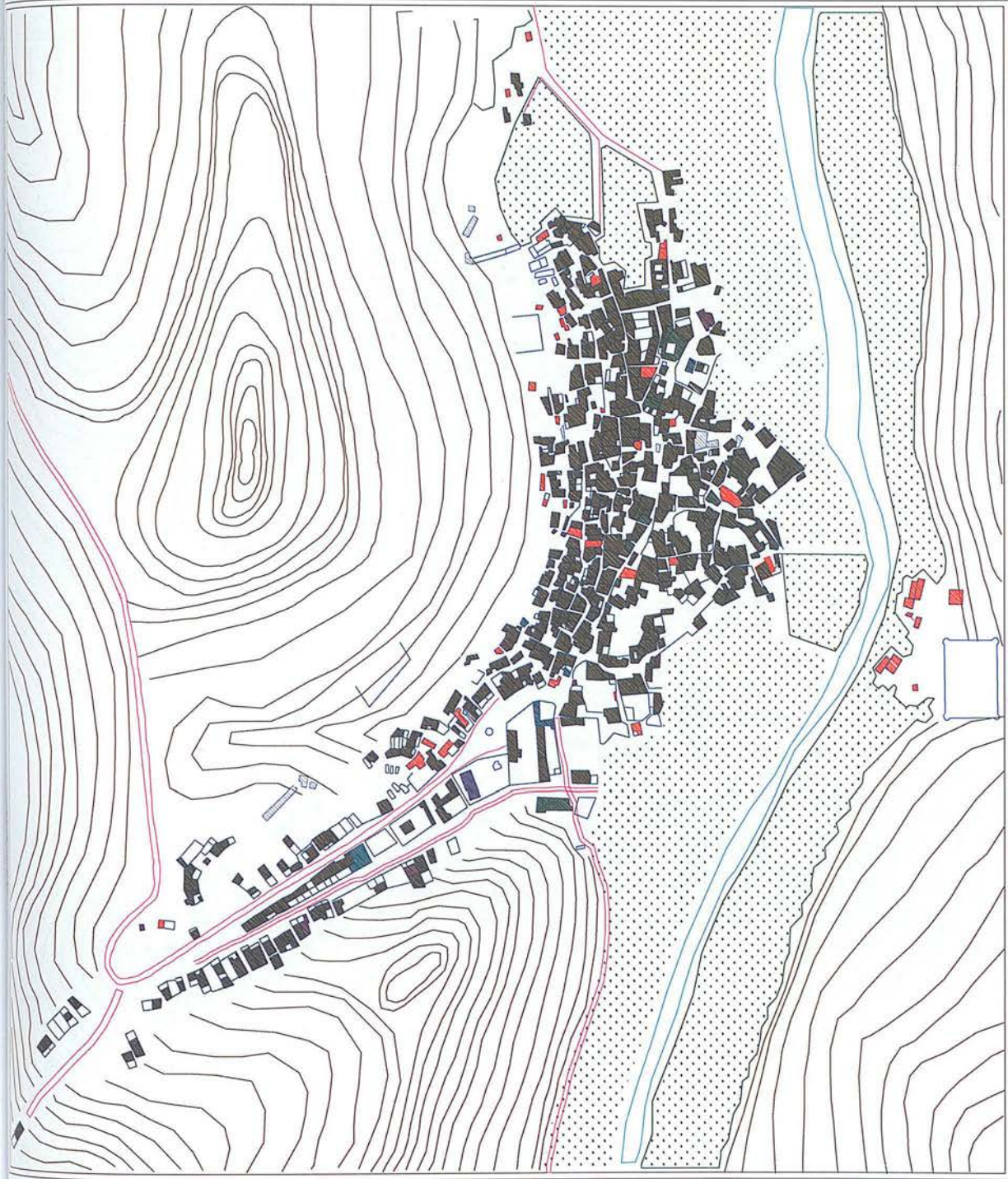
## Key

- Mud bricks and timber
- Stone and timber
- Brick and timber
- Brick and steel
- Mixture

## Type of building material







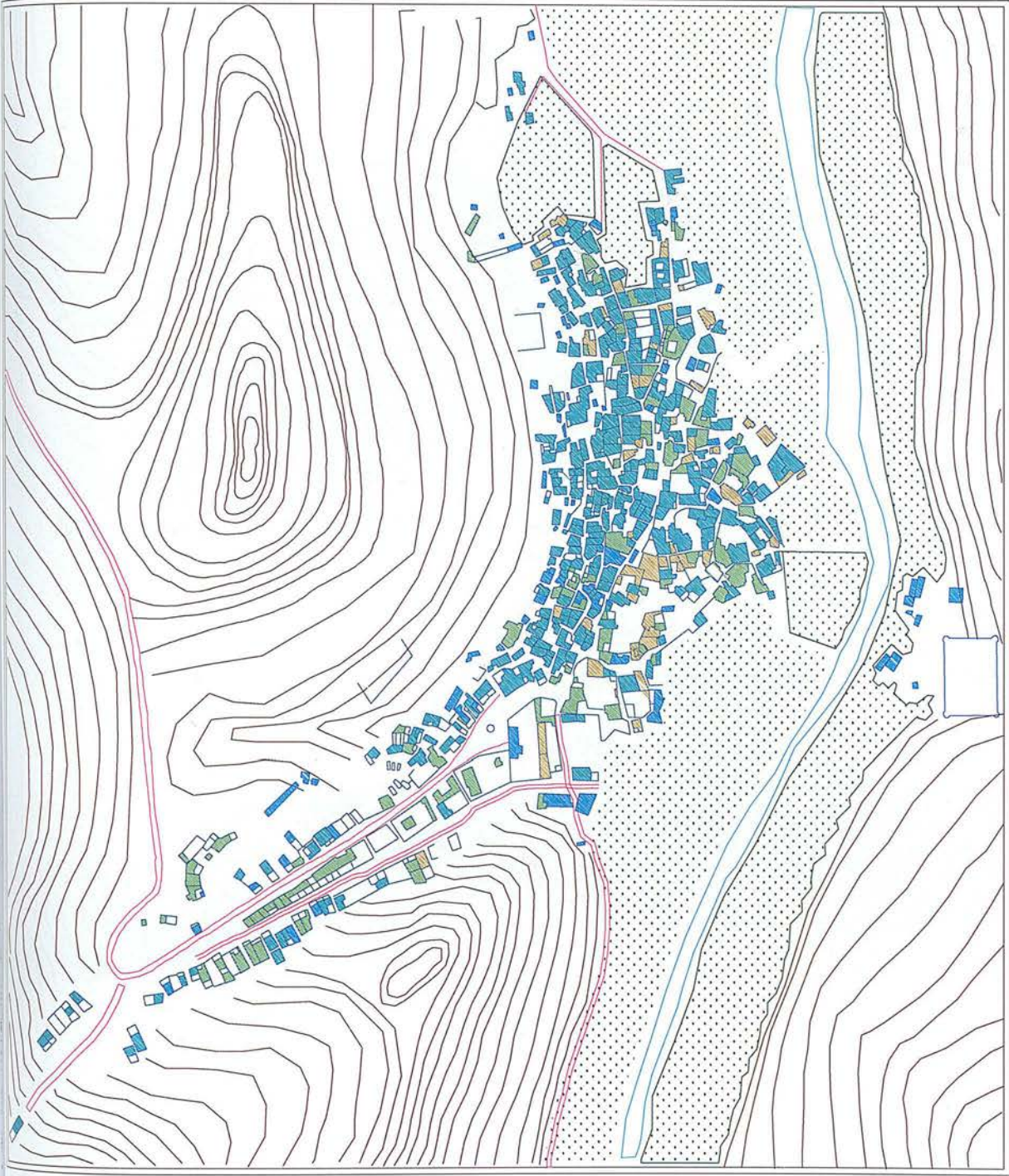
## Key

|             |            |         |             |        |          |          |                     |
|-------------|------------|---------|-------------|--------|----------|----------|---------------------|
| Residential | Commercial | Offices | Educational | Health | Religion | Services | Stables and storage |
|             |            |         |             |        |          |          |                     |

## Land usage







## Key

|   |                     |
|---|---------------------|
| ■ | Permanent           |
| ■ | Seasonal            |
| ■ | Empty of habitation |
| ■ | Unclear             |

## Condition of usage







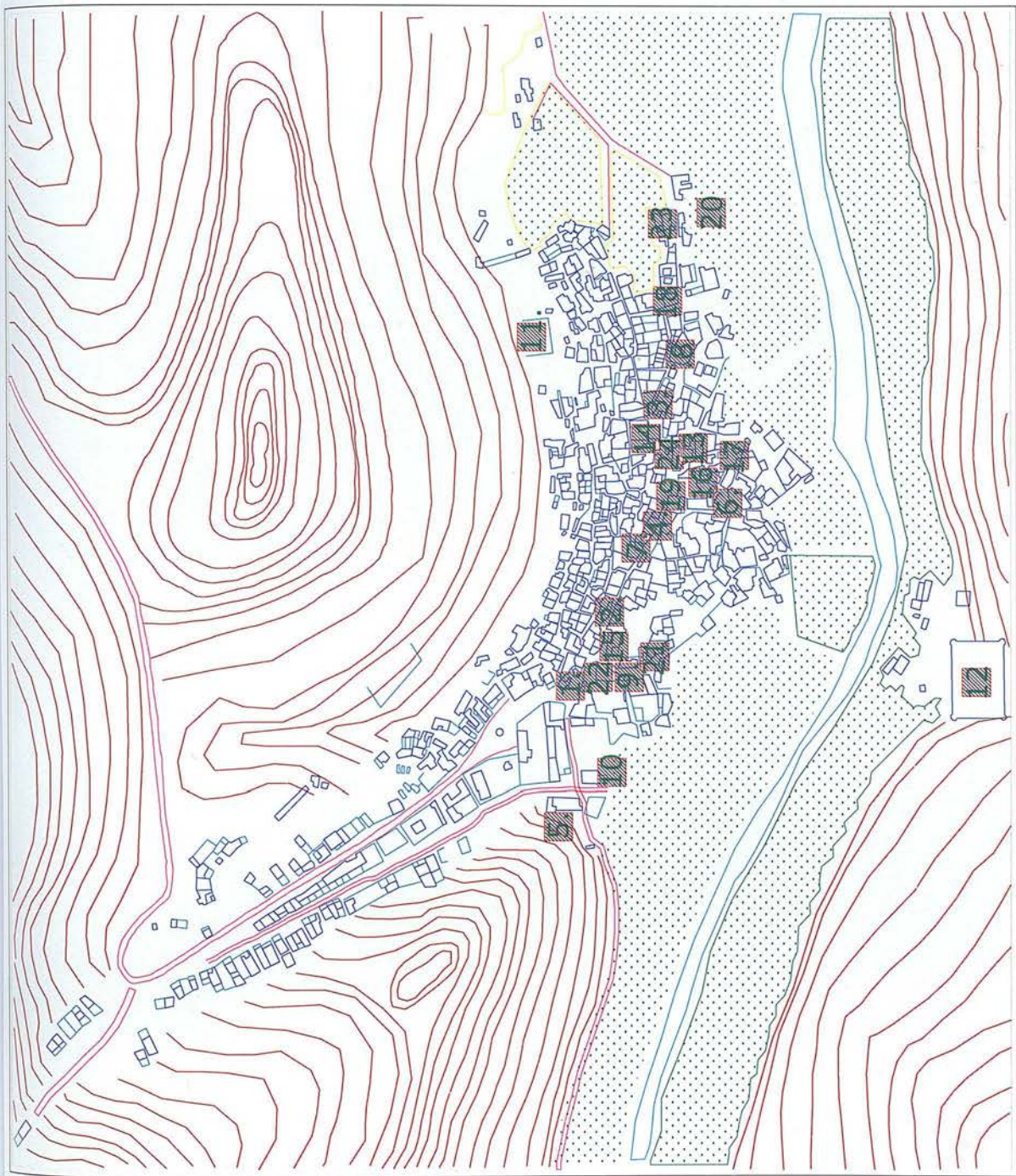
## Key

- Governmental
- Trust
- Private ownership
- Private ownership attached
- Other

## Type of ownership

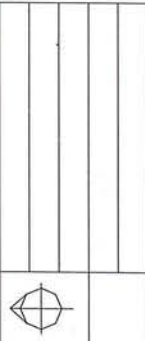




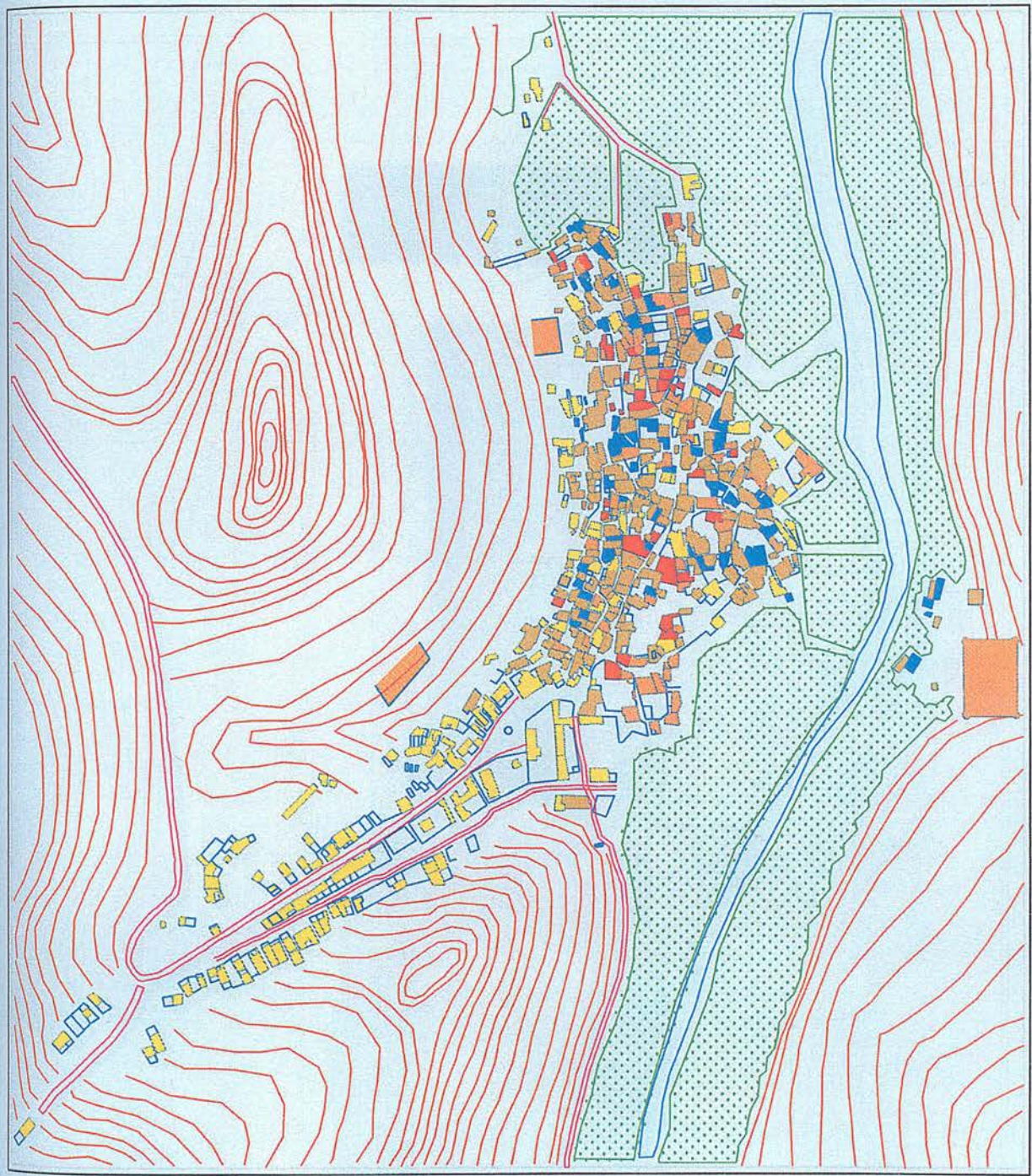


- |                         |                          |
|-------------------------|--------------------------|
| 1. Old gate             | 13. House of Shafie      |
| 2. Hapak Fire Temple    | 14. House of Kabiri      |
| 3. Mosque of Jameh      | 15. House of Hakim       |
| 4. Mosque of Parzaleh   | 16. House of Khazoei     |
| 5. Hajatogh mosque      | 17. House of Ebrahimi    |
| 6. Yousman mosque       | 18. House of Sofrsh      |
| 7. Taleb Parzaleh       | 19. House of Azzolab     |
| 8. The shrine of 'Ayha  | 20. House of Nader Oudom |
| 9. Khaneghah            | 21. House of Jafrelli    |
| 10. Mill                | 22. House of Khaneghah   |
| 11. The Fort of Pel     | 23. House of Burjdar     |
| 12. The fort of Yousman | 24. The Well             |

### Prominent Buildings







Key:



Restored Habitation

Not yet restored

Demolished

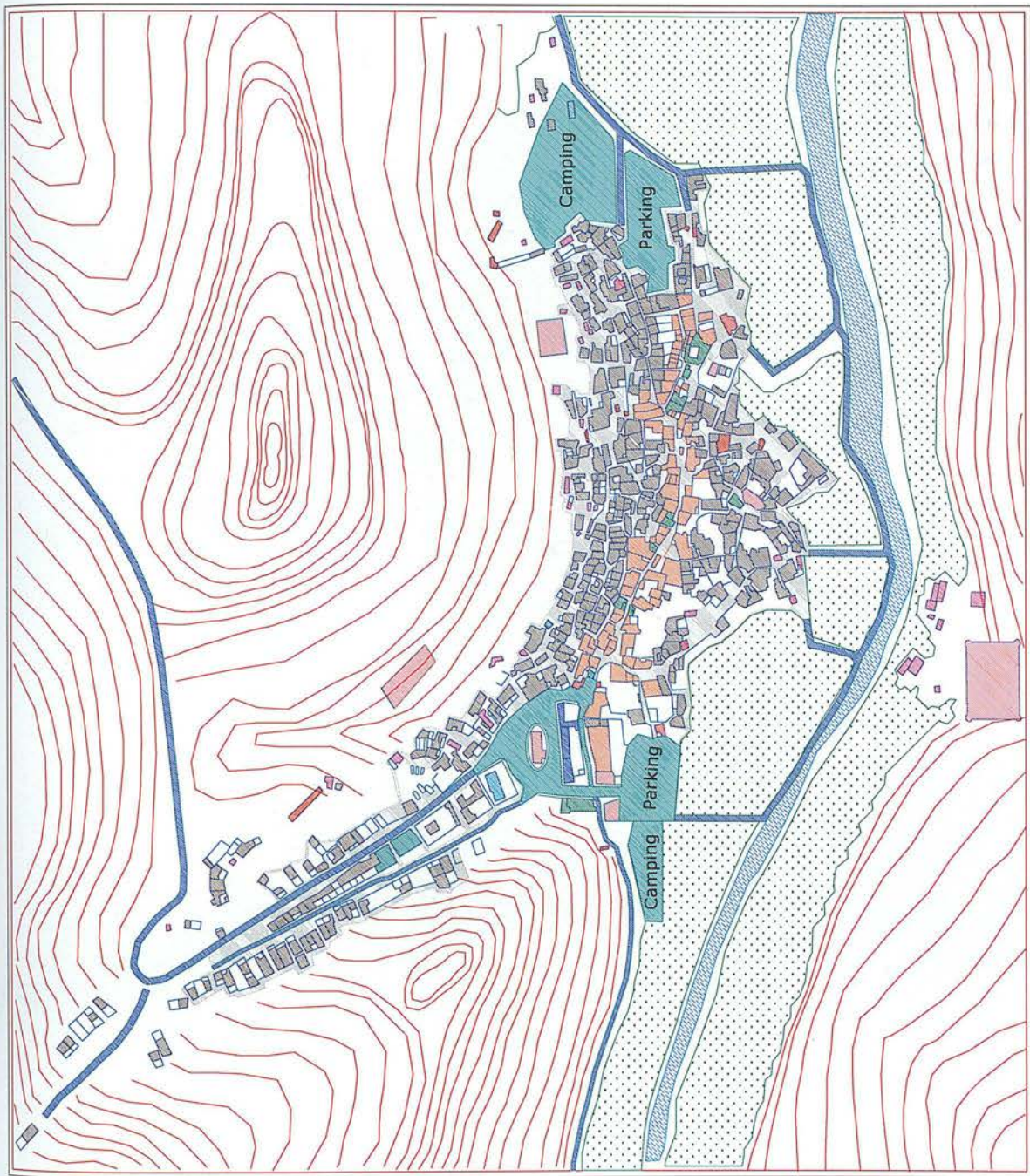
Poor Condition

New Built

Restoration Status



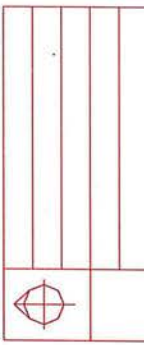




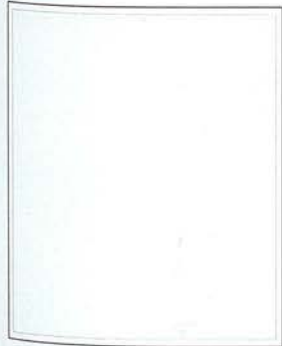
## Key

- Leisure & Tourism
- Residential
- Commercial
- Religious
- Offices
- Educational
- Cultural
- Health
- Agriculture
- Stables & storage

Proposed Planometric special usage



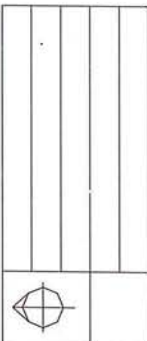




# Key

-  The occupied urban form
-  Orchards
-  Farm land

The boundaries of orchards and farm land





# Key:

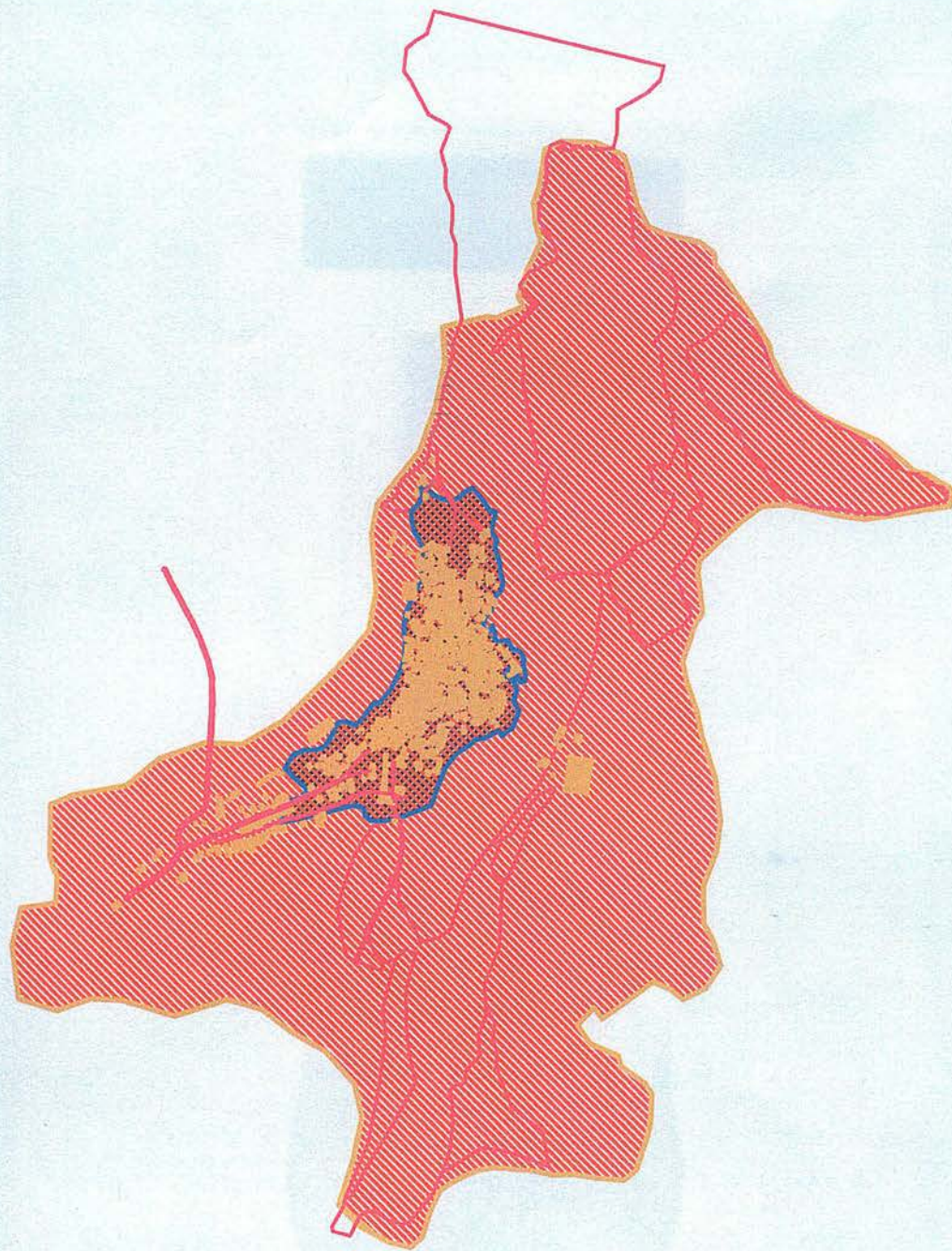
Inner conservation Belt

Outer conservation Belt

## The Recommended Conservation Belt



|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |
|  |  |

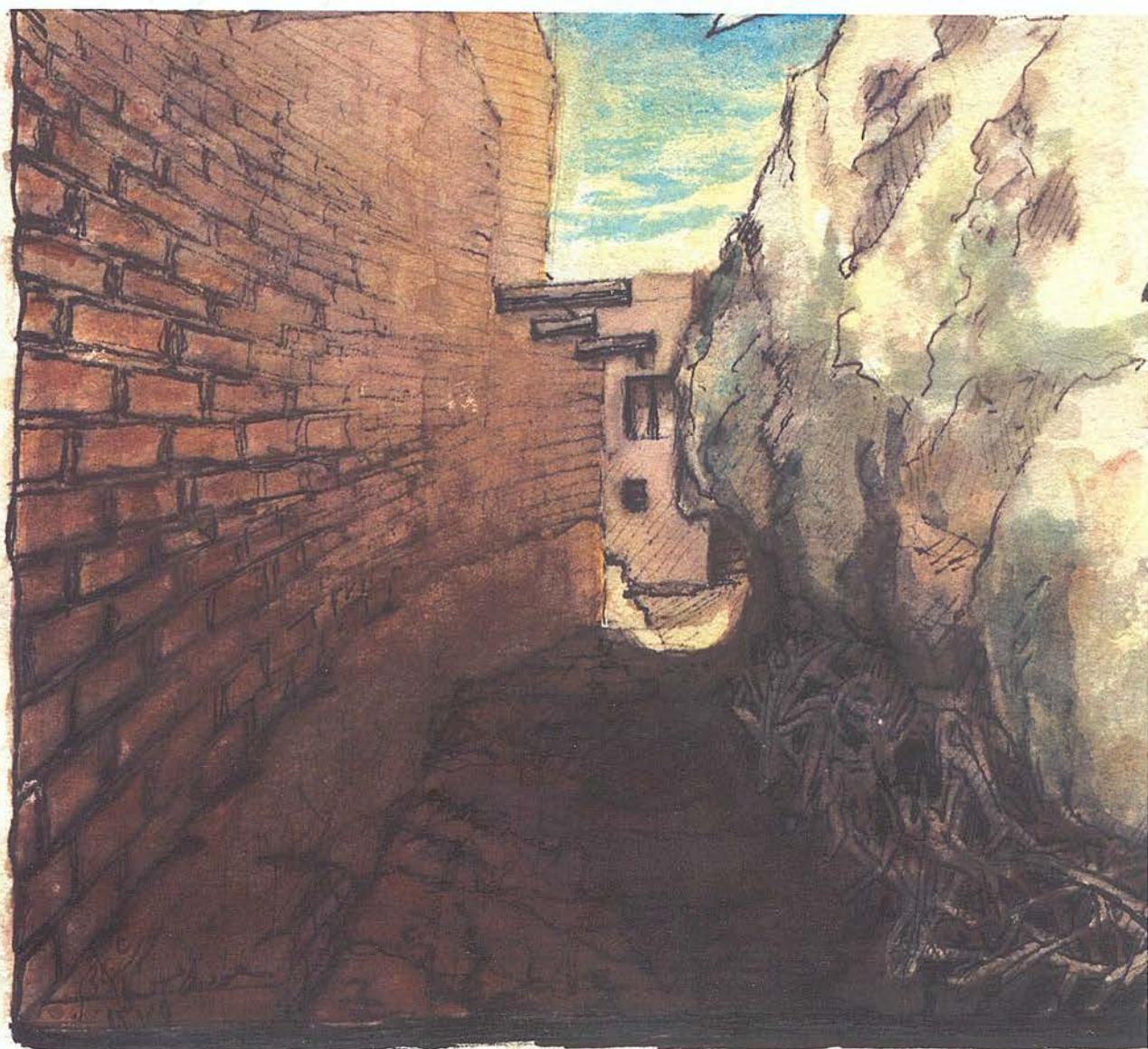






First floor storage space, archetypal type of balcony (Pishkom).  
Water color by the researcher 1999.





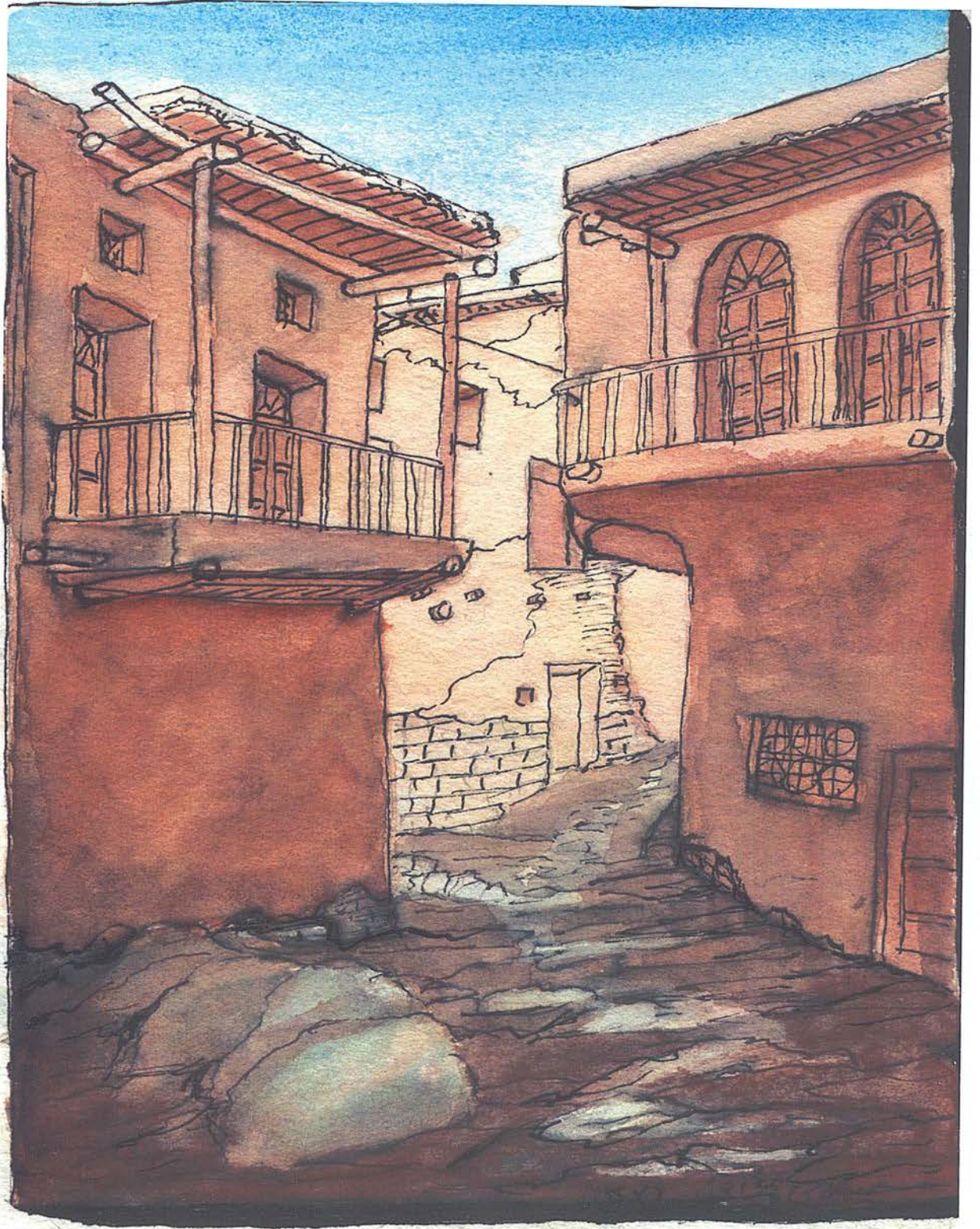
View to the west along the mountain path, to the upper most routes around the settlement, no dead ends in Abianeh, all routs and paths intertwine and connect to each other. Water colour 1998, by the researcher.





A Man and his wife cooking in the open air “Miandeh” central zone looking west.  
Water colour 1998, by the researcher.





Intimacy of dwellings; view north west close to the main gateway.  
Water colour 1998, by the researcher.



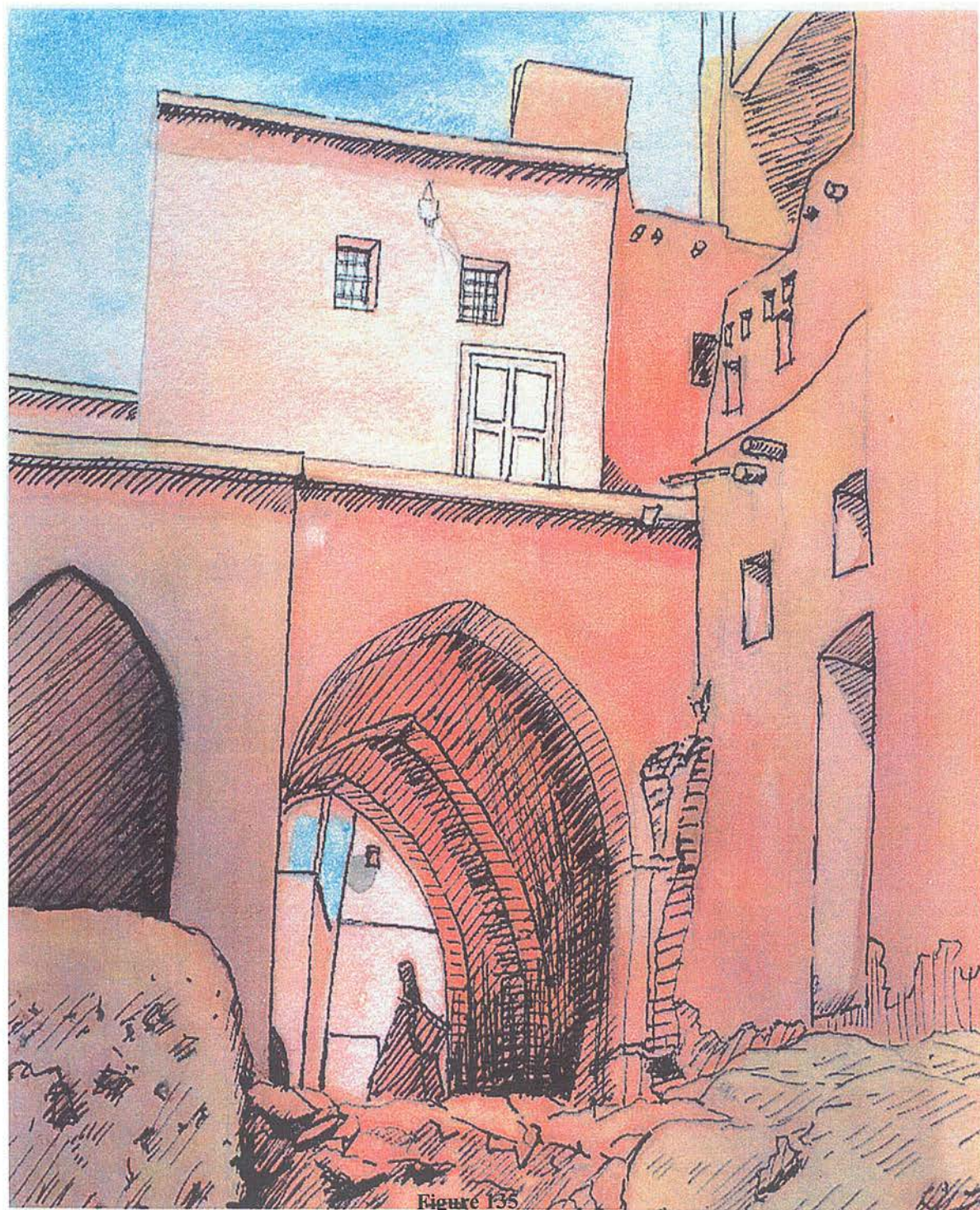


Figure 135

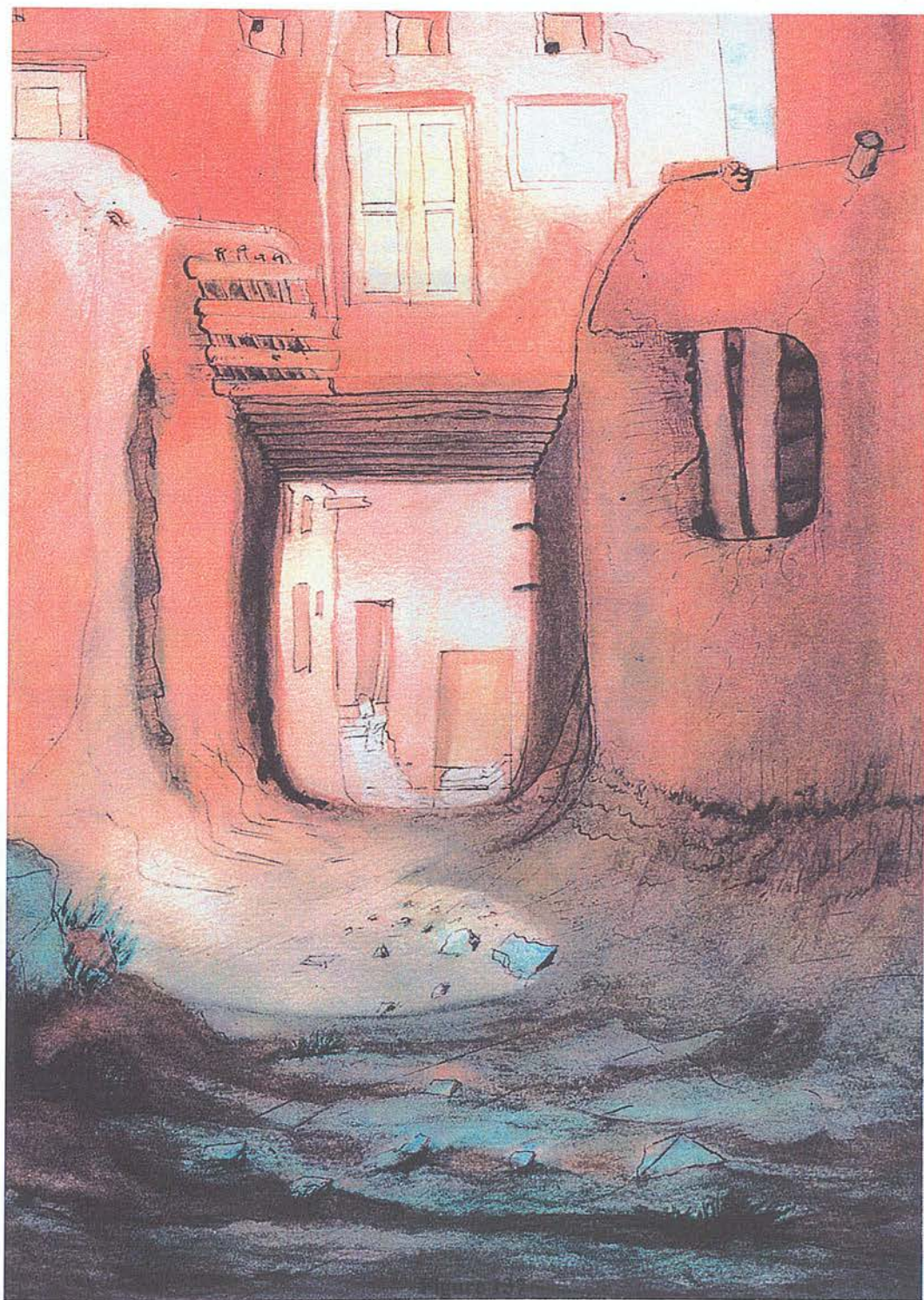
The fire temple of Harpak, converted to residential units, integrated with the main route Rashteh the main path through the settlement.





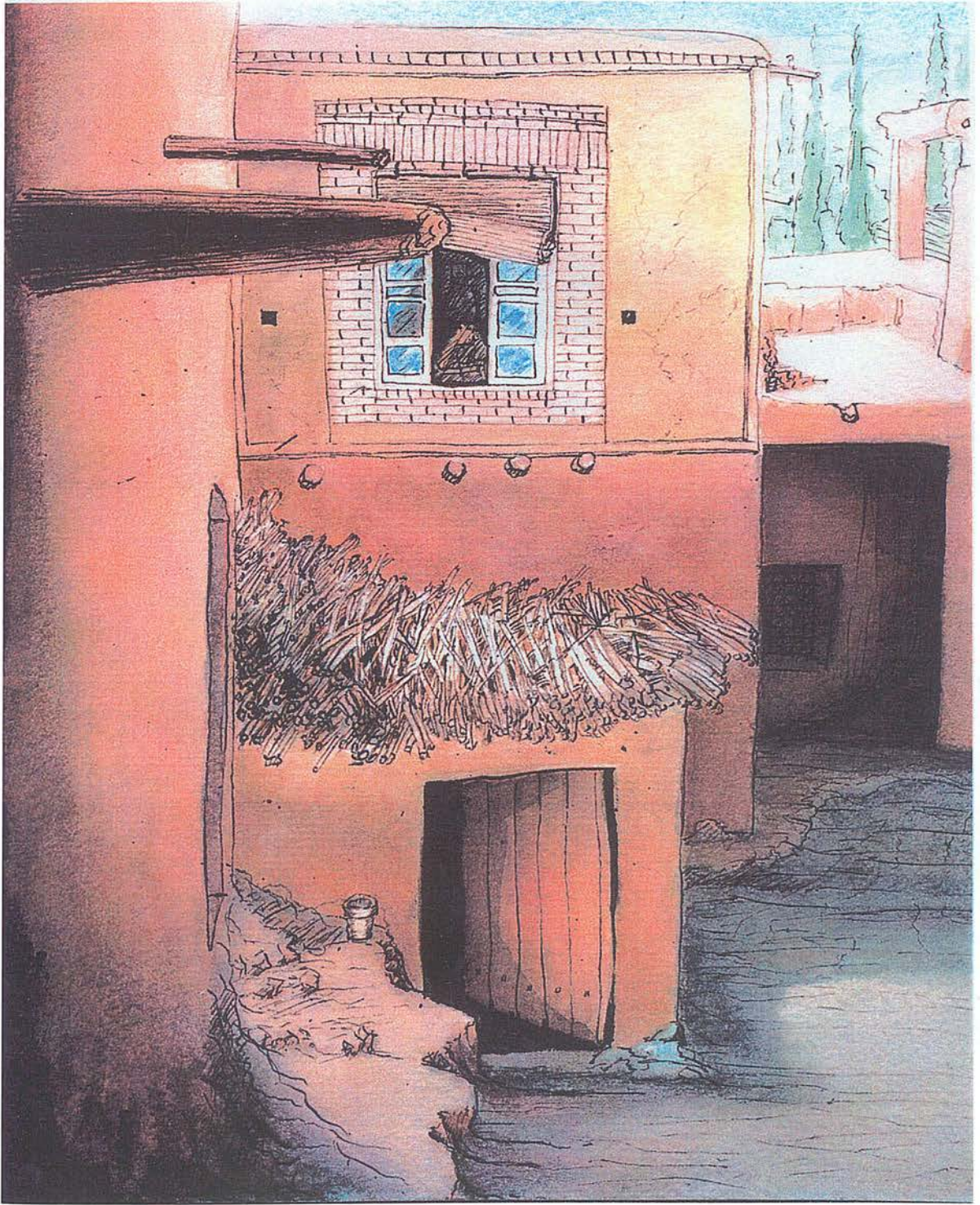
View north at the naturally formed stair, route from the main Rashteh to a secondary route to the north of the settlement.  
Water colour 1998, by the researcher.





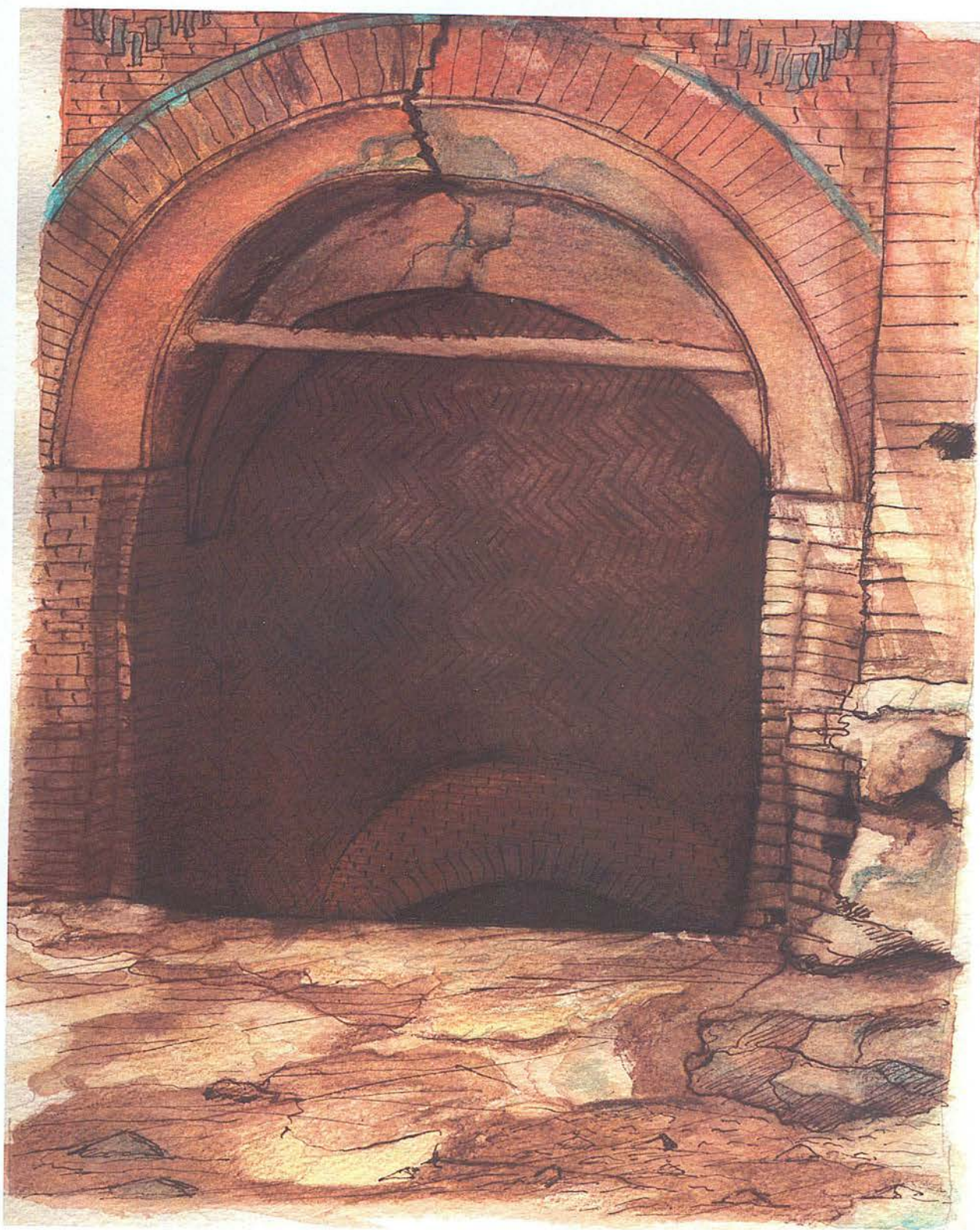
View west along a secondary route to the north of the settlement, “Miandeh”, showing the archetypal Gozar (archway),.  
Water colour 1999, by the researcher.





View south to a composite unit of modern brick and traditional construction technique.  
Water colour 1999 by the researcher.





Water colour of the main Abanbar (Water Well) along the route, Rashteh.  
Water colour 1999, by the researcher.

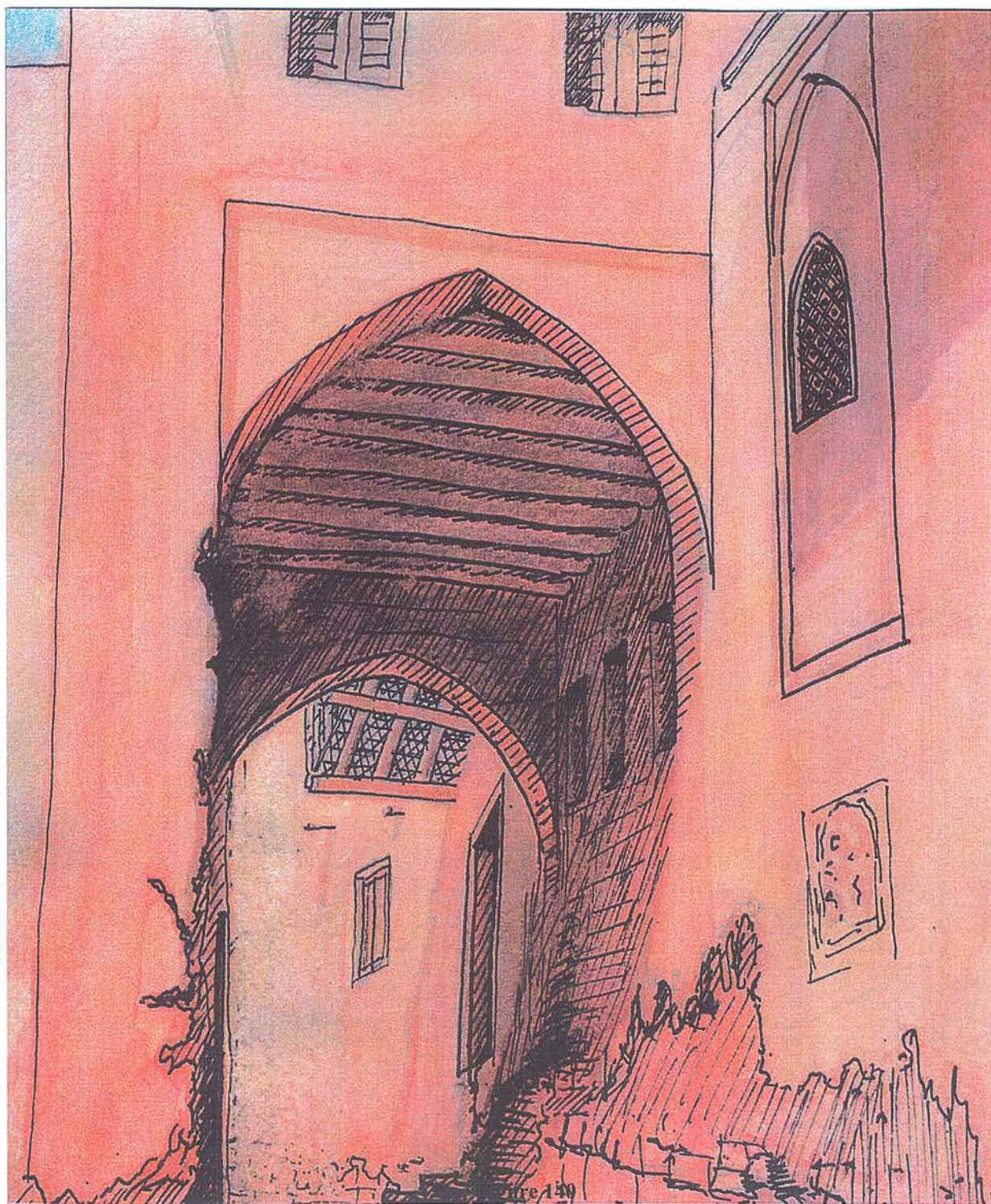




View east along the main route Rashteh, showing integration of complex carpentry work in dwellings.

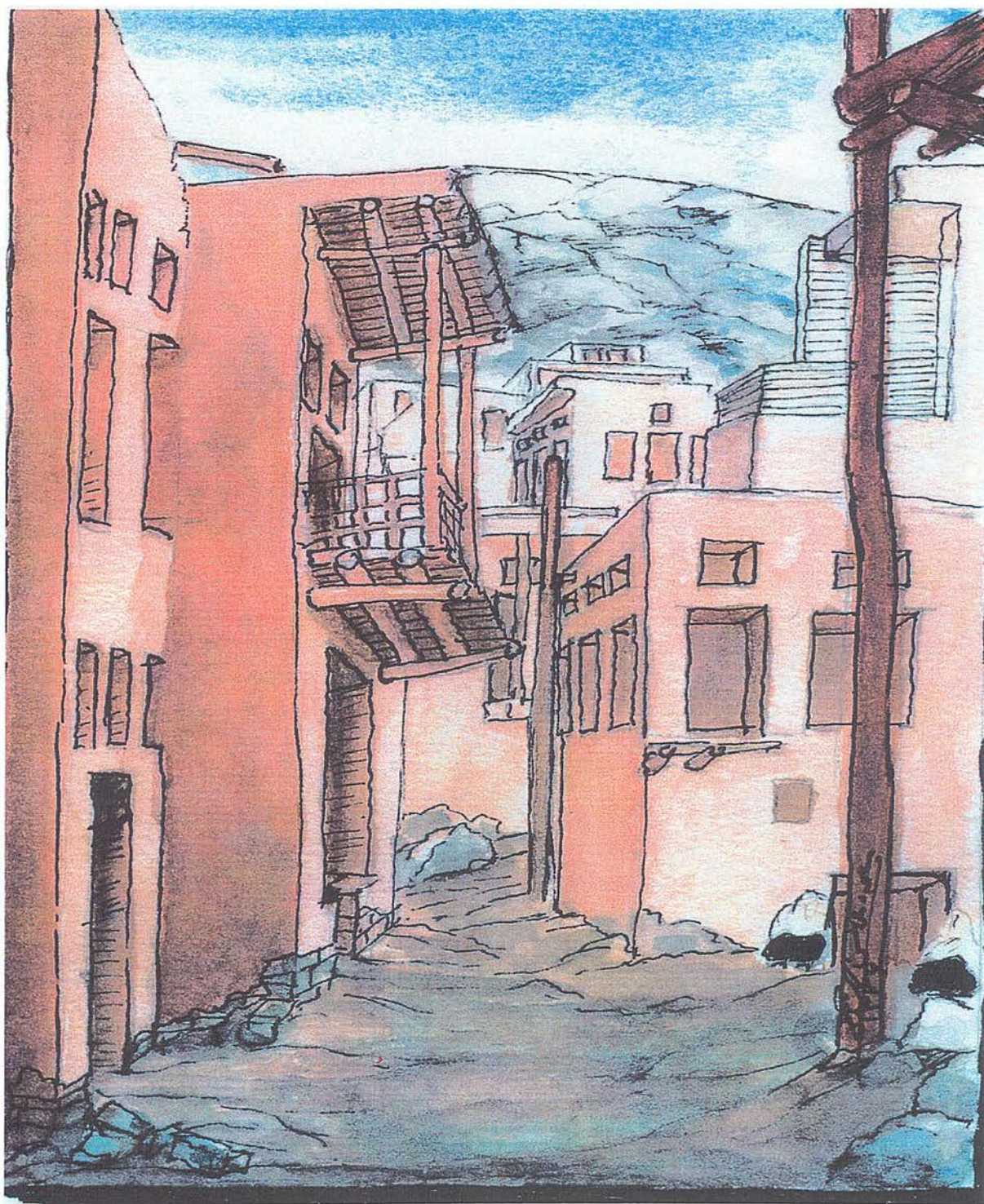
Water colour 1998, by the researcher





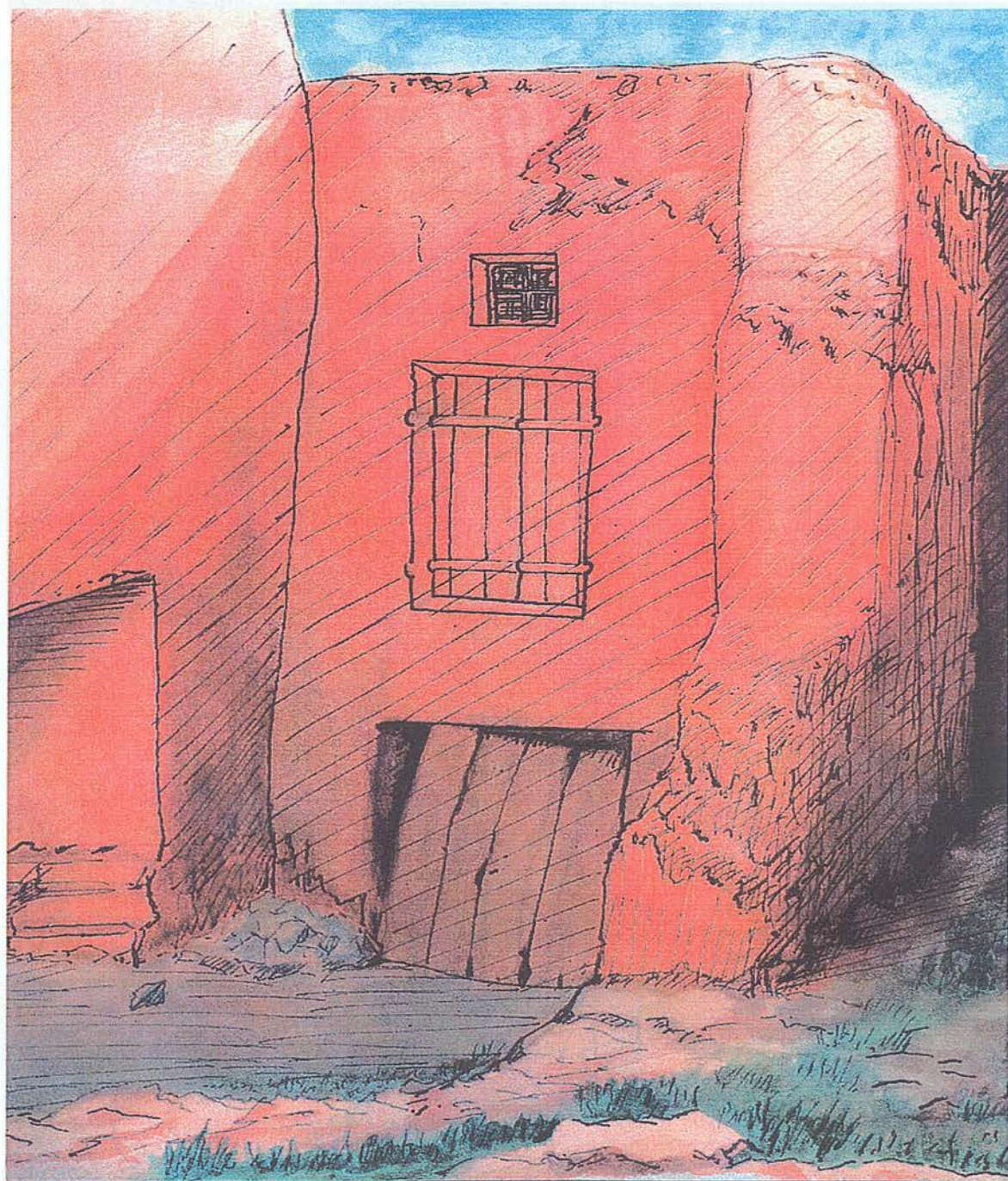
Water colour of the main Gozar (archway), along the route Rashtah.  
Water colour 1999, by the researcher.





A secondary route off the Rashteh looking north  
Water colour 1999, by the researcher.





View south looking down at a dwelling in use with one section deteriorated, but with its original “Akhori” (Stable), below still functional.

Water colour 1998 by the researcher.



# Chronology of Persian History

## Abianeh and its predicted development

|   |   |   |
|---|---|---|
| Prophet Zoroaster   | 788-551 B.C.<br>(Some sources put the date back to 2200 B.C.) |   |
| Medas   | 728   | The Fire Temple and the worshipping of fire earth and water |
| The ACHAEMENIAN DYNASTY   | 559-330 B.C.  |   |
| <i>Death of Cyrus the Great, the founder of the Achaemenians</i> <u>The First Charter of Human Right by King Cyrus, Founder of the Persian Empire</u> | 530 B.C   |   |
| <i>Rule of Darius, the second great Achaemenian ruler</i>   | 522-486 B.C.  |   |
| <i>Xerxes, the king</i>   | 486-465 B.C.  |   |
| <i>Alexander, the Macedonian, conquers Persia</i>   | 330 B.C.  | Took South of Iran with Kashan and Abianeh on their way     |
| THE SELEUCID DYNASTY  | 312-247 B.C.  | The importation of Grecian life and culture into Iran       |



|  |                       |  |
|--|-----------------------|--|
| THE PARTHIAN DYNASTY   | 226-651               |  |
| THE SASSANID DYNASTY   | 226-240               | The mehrab in Jameh Mosque was made in Abianeh   |
| <i>Rule of Ardeshir, the founder of the Sassanid's</i>                     | 226-240               |  |
| Death of the Sassanid king, Shapur 1                                       | 272                   |  |
| Death of the prophet Mani, the founder of Manichaesim                      | 274                   |  |
| Mazdakism  | End of 5th and 6th C. |  |
| <i>Rule of Chosroes I (Anosharvan)</i>                                     | 531-579               |  |
| Sassanid invasion of Byzantium   | 603                   |  |
| Sassanid conquest of Alexandria  | 619                   |  |
| Death of Chosroes I  | 628                   |  |
| Arab conquest of Persia  | 637-651               | Language changes and influence of Arabic writing |
| Battle of Nahavan  | 642                   |  |
| Death of the last Sassanid king, Yazdegird                                 | 651                   |  |
| Period of the rule of the Umayyad caliphate over Persia                    | 642-750               |  |
| Death of the first Shi-ite Imam and fourth Sunni caliph, Ali ebn Abu Taleb | 661                   |  |
| Death of the Third Shi-ite Imam Hosayn at Karbala                          | 680                   |  |
| Revolt of the Persian general Abu Moslem in Khorasan against the Umayyads  | 747                   |  |
| The Abbasid caliphate  | 750-1258              |  |



|  |           |                                    |
|--|-----------|------------------------------------|
| Death of the Sixth Shi-ite Imam Jafar al-Sadeq   | 765       |                                    |
| Death of the Eighth Shi-ite Imam Reza  | 818       |                                    |
| THE TAHIRID DYNASTY  | 821-873   |                                    |
| THE SAFFARID DYNASTY   | 867-1163  |                                    |
| Beginning of the "lesser concealment" of the Twelfth Shi-ite Imam                        | 874       |                                    |
| THE SAMANID DYNASTY  | 829-999   |                                    |
| THE BUYID DYNASTY  | 945-1055  |                                    |
| Death of the philosopher Farabi  | 950       |                                    |
| THE GHAZNAVID DYNASTY  | 977-1186  |                                    |
| Composition of the greatest epic poem of the Persian language, the Shahnameh of Ferdousi | 994       |                                    |
| Death of the philosopher-scientist Avicenna (Ebn Sina)                                   | 1037      |                                    |
| THE SELJUQ DYNASTY   | 1040-1220 |                                    |
| The journey of the philosopher and poet Naser-e-Khosrau through the East                 | 1045-1052 |                                    |
| Death of the scientist and historian Biruni  | 1050      |                                    |
| Death of the theologian and Sufi, Ghazzali   | 1111      |                                    |
| The Mongol conquest of Persia  | 1219-1258 |                                    |
| THE IL-KHANID DYNASTY  | 1256-1336 | the expansion of Siffrn in Abianeh |
| Death of the Sufi poet Jalal al-Din Rumi   | 1273      |                                    |
| Death of the poet and moralist, Sa'di  | 1291      |                                    |



|  |           |  |
|--|-----------|--|
| Rule of the local dynasties in Persia  | 1336-1380 |  |
| Rule of the world conqueror Tamerlane  | 1380-1404 |  |
| Death of the supreme lyrical poet of the Persian language, Hafez   | 1389      |  |
| THE TIMURIDS AND LOCAL DYNASTIES   | 1405-1500 |  |
| Death of the Sufi poet Jami  | 1492      |  |
| THE SAFAVID DYNASTY  | 1500-1722 | Portuguese Occupied Hormuz and trade boomed in the region, Abianeh major development of Safavid iconographic symbolism and decorative features                       |
| Death of the philosopher-gnostic Molla Sadra   | 1640      |  |
| Afghan invasion and rule of Persia   | 1722-1732 |  |
| Rule of Nader Shah   | 1736-1747 |  |
| THE ZAND DYNASTY   | 1747-1787 | Russian Invasion   |
| THE QAJAR DYNASTY  | 1787-1925 | British and Russian Rule   |
| Death of the prime minister and reformer Amir Kabir  | 1852      |  |
| The Persian Constitutional Revolution  | 1905      |  |
| Foundation of the Pahlavi Dynasty by Reza Shah   | 1925      |  |
| Allied invasion of Persia  | 1941      |  |
| Beginning of rule of Mohammad Reza Shah Pahlavi Aryamehr   | 1941      | Persia was renamed Iran, Abianeh was recorded and work commenced in its preservation, in 1960-70 Mr. Ben Commenced his drawings but never got to complete on Abianeh |
| The Islamic Revolution and the end of the Pahlavi Dynasty<br>Death of Ayatollah Khomeini founder of Islamic Republic of Iran | 1989      |  |

|  |            |   |
|--|------------|---|
| National Heritage of Iran support and registration of the preservation order and the preservation belt of Abianeh as proposed by the researcher. | 1997-1998  | The commencement of the Thesis on Abianeh by Mr. M.M. Kashani   |
|  | March 2006 | Completion of the Thesis and the Presentation of the revitalization proposal for Abianeh by Mr.M.M. Kashani |